

# **The Influence of Research on Public Policies**

## **Latin American Trade Network LATN**

### **A Case Study**

By:  
Luis Macadar  
Consulting Economist

Montevideo, Uruguay  
April 2003

"Any good work is bound to have an influence".

"Influence is indirect for the most part. It's like additional ammunition against standing targets".

(Comments from interviews)

## **Table of Contents**

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Executive Summary

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Background
- 1.2. Methodology
- 1.3. People interviewed
  - 1.3.1. Profile
  - 1.3.2. Participation
  - 1.3.3. Motivation
  - 1.3.4. Factors affecting the opinions expressed
- 1.4. The structure of the report

### **2. The project**

- 2.1. Basic data
- 2.2. Objectives and areas of study
- 2.3. Organization, activities and results

### **3. Objectives and use of results**

- 3.1. The objectives as seen by the players
- 3.2. Changes in the objectives during the course of the project
- 3.3. The use of the results
  - 3.3.1. Knowledge generation
  - 3.3.2. The enlightenment effort
  - 3.3.3. Organization, coordination and outreach

### **4. The policy formulation process**

- 4.1. The decision-making structure
- 4.2. The power of the negotiating bureaucracy.
- 4.3. The influence of line personnel
- 4.4. High turnover and volatility
- 4.5. Institutional-bureaucratic disputes
- 4.6. Outreach strategies
  - 4.6.1. Target groups
  - 4.6.2. Means used

### **5. Influence on policy formulation**

- 5.1. Conceptual aspects
- 5.2. Types of influence

### 5.3. Principal actors influenced

## **6. Methods and mechanisms of exerting influence**

### 6.1. Direct influence

- 6.1.1. Appointment to positions of political responsibility
- 6.1.2. Personal relationships
- 6.1.3. Specific consulting contracts

### 6.2. Indirect influence

- 6.2.1. Dissemination of documents
- 6.2.2. Participation in forums
- 6.2.3. Education and training courses

## **7. Factors affecting policy influence**

- 7.1. Interest in the topic of international trade negotiations
- 7.2. The economic context
- 7.3. The political context
- 7.4. Political and institutional factors
- 7.5. Cultural factors
- 7.6. Networking
- 7.7. Analyzing and planning activities
- 7.8. Characteristics of network members
- 7.9. The LATN approach and its "trademark"
- 7.10. Designing and implementing an outreach strategy
- 7.11. Correlation of forces

## **8. Some conclusions**

### Bibliography

Annex A: Persons interviewed

Annex B: Questions for interviews

### Acronyms and Abbreviations

BNDES	National Bank for Economic and Social Development, Brazil
CIEPLAN	<i>Corporación de Investigaciones Económicas para América Latina</i> (Economic Research Corporation for Latin America)
CNI	National Confederation of Industries, Brazil
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	European Union
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
FLACSO	<i>Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales</i> (Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences)
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LATN	Latin American Trade Network/ <i>Red Latinoamericana de Comercio Internacional</i>
Mercosur	<i>Mercado Común del Sur</i> (Southern Common Market)
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PUC	<i>Pontificia Universidade Católica</i> , Brazil
Red Mercosur	<i>Red de Investigaciones Económicas del Mercosur</i> (Mercosur Economic Research Network)
TEC	Trade, Employment, and Competitiveness
UFRJ	<i>Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro</i> , Brazil
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WTO	World Trade Organization

## **Executive Summary**

The Evaluation Unit of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC, Canada) is conducting a study to determine the impact on public policy formulation of the research activities it supports. As part of this program, the Unit has commissioned external consultants to prepare a series of studies on IDRC-financed projects. Through these studies, the Centre hopes to refine the design of projects and programs and to draw lessons that can be applied in the institution's strategic planning process.

This report contains one of those studies, devoted to the project for "Leading Issues in International Trade Relations", No. 03392. That project constitutes the first phase of the Latin American Trade Network (LATN), which is based at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) in Buenos Aires.

In accordance with the terms of reference, the study was based on a prior review of several documents: the initial proposal, progress reports, the final report, program officers' reports, evaluation reports, and publications conveying the results of the research. In addition, personal interviews were held with a number of players involved in project activities in Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay.

The report begins by reviewing the original objectives as defined by the project's sponsors, and then re-examines them in light of the opinions collected during the interviews. It next describes the main characteristics of the policy process in some of the region's countries, highlighting those aspects relating to the structure of decision-making, the power of the bureaucracy, and the impact of line personnel.

The outreach strategy serves as a bridge linking the policy process with policy influence, and focuses on the specific articulation that the project has achieved between target groups, the characteristics of the policy process, and the means of dissemination used.

Chapter 5 examines the major influences that the project had in policy formulation. It finds evidence of all three types of influence as defined by Lindquist, with the greatest emphasis on the first two: "expanding policy capacities" and "broadening policy horizons".

In terms of the principal factors that affect policy influence, the most important ones, are, in descending order, the timeliness of the issue, the political and institutional factors in play, the structure of linkages established by the network, the specific focus of LATN work, and the suitability of the outreach strategy.

The "Conclusions" section points to the factors that help to increase and expand the influence of project activities on policy formulation. It also identifies the obstacles posed by the significant degree of institutional, political and economic heterogeneity in the region. This makes it difficult to offer a single recipe for influence that will work in all countries, and under all circumstances, particularly when applied in national and regional contexts shaken by profound economic, political and social upheavals.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background**

In many IDRC projects and programs it is expected that the research activities supported will have an influence on policy formulation. Accordingly, the IDRC Evaluation Unit is conducting a series of studies addressing three key questions:

- What constitutes public policy influence in IDRC's experience?
- To what degrees, and in what ways, has IDRC-supported research influenced public policy?
- What factors and conditions have facilitated or inhibited the public policy influence potential of IDRC-supported research?<sup>1</sup>

By understanding this phenomenon more thoroughly, IDRC hopes to improve the design of projects where policy issues are an important target. As well, it is expected that such an understanding will contribute to improving the design of the Centre's programs.

One important component of the information needed to meet these objectives is the case studies that IDRC has commissioned from external consultants for several of the projects it has supported. Those studies will provide detailed data on the process by which research influences policy formulation in various areas of interest to the Centre.

This paper is devoted to a study of the Latin American Trade Network (LATN).

### **1.2. Methodology**

Consistent with the terms of reference for the study, the methodology is based on the case study approach. The work involved reviewing the main documents on the LATN project: the design of the proposal, progress reports, technical reports, final reports, evaluation reports, trip reports, etc., as well as examining the documents containing the principal outcomes of the project.

The study also involved a series of interviews with members of the LATN network and other players who have participated in its activities in Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay. The persons interviewed were deliberately selected to include players who were representative of the network's various activities and who could bring distinct perspectives to bear, reflecting their particular role in the project.

### **1.3. People interviewed**

#### *1.3.1. Profile*

---

<sup>1</sup> IDRC Evaluation Unit paper.

The interviews were conducted with five different types of players:<sup>2</sup>

- Academics and researchers: experts in international trade negotiation, trade policy, microeconomics and finance, foreign investment, international economics, economic history, economic integration, industrial policy and international relations.
- Policymakers, negotiators and government advisers.
- LATN Director and Coordinators.
- IDRC program officers.
- Other participants (businesspeople, private sector advisers).

LATN consists of researchers and policy officials from Latin American countries, and people working with international agencies. The basic relationship of each member is with the Coordination Unit, which is based in Buenos Aires at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), quite apart from any relationships that members may establish among themselves.

The researchers operating in the network include, on one hand, academics with broad experience in the basic issues, many of whom are internationally known for their intellectual output. For such people, being connected to the network was a natural extension of their previous experience. On the other hand, these more experienced academics were joined by young researchers who were for the most part students or recent graduates of FLACSO courses.

### *1.3.2. Participation*

Some of the persons interviewed were involved in the network's activities directly through preparing working papers, participating at conferences and seminars, consulting under contract on various issues, communicating via the network, disseminating results, organizing and giving training courses, coordinating work, setting up and monitoring the network, controlling the quality of output, and developing new projects.

Other players participated in the project through attending courses, conferences and seminars, requesting technical support on specific issues, reading the briefing notes or working papers, visiting the website, asking for materials and information, and in general using the network's work as a source of ideas.

It is noteworthy that several of those interviewed fulfilled various roles (as researchers, negotiators, government advisers) either simultaneously or rotationally over time.

This is in fact a characteristic trait of the policy formulation process in these countries, and something that must be born in mind in evaluating the policy impact of research in the context of this project.

---

<sup>2</sup> Annex A contains a complete list of the persons interviewed, their professional background and the positions they hold in their respective countries. All interviews were recorded, and the tapes will be sent in due course.



### *1.3.3. Motivation*

Players cited a number of motivations for involving themselves in the project.

- i. Lack of knowledge of trade negotiation issues. Only a few people have a proper understanding of the trade and services agreements negotiated by countries of the region, and the actual contents of the international negotiating agendas. The need to broaden and disseminate this knowledge among the growing number of players was therefore an important motivation.
- ii. International trade issues are seen as inextricably linked to the prospects of these countries for faster growth<sup>3</sup>. In fact, these issues are part of the spectrum of academic concerns among member researchers, and this has sparked a community of interests that produced high levels of response to invitations to meetings, seminars, and discussions, and the distribution of information by the network.
- iii. The possibility of exerting influence on the formulation of public policies. As well, academics were attracted by the potential for publishing and disseminating their ideas beyond frontiers and in various languages.
- iv. The challenge of reducing the distance that exists between academic activity and the knowledge and information needs of policymakers. An important motivation was to foster linkages, communication and interchange between these two sectors.
- v. The relative lack of experience in Latin American countries in working with some of the key tools of trade regulation.
- vi. The need to strengthen the positioning of their countries abroad, especially as the pace of negotiations picks up.
- vii. The attraction of managing and developing a network, based on a different way of relating to other players and offering the chance to participate in something more integrated.
- viii. Interest in learning about progress in other Latin American countries as regards the project's issues, and in engaging in horizontal analysis of that progress by making contacts and sharing mutual concerns with other researchers working in the same area.

---

<sup>3</sup> In the case of Argentina, the openness of the economy (its "export openness coefficient") has declined sharply: the ratio of exports to GDP fell from 30 percent to 7 percent, and the country's share of world exports shrank from 3 percent to 0.7 percent. Despite the efficiency it has achieved in primary production, with a population of 30 million Argentina can no longer afford to convey this image of a pastoral country. That would be incompatible with any possibility of meeting its people's income aspirations. For Chile, with a population of 15 million, it might be possible to meet those aspirations by reducing the levels of tariff protection. In all cases, a dynamic and growing external trade sector would seem to be indispensable.

ix. The need for focused and specialized information on issues considered relevant. Participation in the network made it possible to gather, organize, filter and select information from scattered sources. In this respect, LATN has become a framework of reference for international information searches.

#### *1.3.4. Factors affecting the opinions expressed*

In general, the opinions expressed during an interview reflect and are shaped by a series of factors of different origin, nature and relative weight. It is important therefore to keep in mind the personal outlook of the interviewee, his or her academic and professional training, background and previous career, employment status, and the national, regional and global context in which that person acts. These factors influence a player's perception and understanding of the policy influence of research, as well as the way in which he or she identifies and evaluates the factors that promote or obstruct such influence.

Naturally, it is not possible to measure and evaluate the relative importance of each of these factors in the responses obtained during the field work. Nevertheless, some of them are felt to be particularly significant.

- In the first place, there is the acute economic, political and social crisis now gripping countries in the region. For the majority of researchers, it is the most severe crisis of the past century.
- The varied and multiple academic and professional involvements of LATN researchers in different spheres of public and private life. Consequently, their judgments incorporate knowledge gleaned from all their activities, and not just from their participation in the network.
- The relationship between receptivity to influence from research and the institutional structure of relations between research and the public sector differs from one country to the next.
- The interviewee's preconceived notion of a defined model for the process of policy formulation. This was not always explicit, but it was used as a standard of reference for forming a judgment about the way the process functions in their respective countries. This normative standard coincided in most cases with the one that predominates in more developed countries.
- In many cases, interviewees had not given much previous thought to some of the questions, in particular as to what they understood by "the influence of research on public policy", and what they considered to be the mechanisms by which that influence makes itself felt. In some cases, the responses tended to be superficial, intuitive and "off the cuff", or proffered merely for the sake of giving an answer.

- Since this study is based on the existence of a network whose members are scattered in different countries of the region that exhibit contrasting economic, political and social circumstances, these factors had to be given different weightings, making it difficult to achieve a single, definite vision.

#### **1.4. The structure of the report**

The results of this study are structured in eight chapters. Chapter 2 presents the principal data on the project and describes the profile of the original proposal. Chapter 3 compares objectives and activities with the vision of the players interviewed. Chapter 4 analyzes the political process of decision-making, and examines the outreach strategy, which serves as a bridge to Chapter 5. That chapter reviews the types of influence that the project has had on policy formulation, and their connection with the strategy selected. Chapter 6 looks at the different mechanisms (direct and indirect) on which the influence was based. Chapter 7 reviews the principal factors that have worked for or against the project's influence on public policies. Finally, the last chapter offers some conclusions.

### **2. The project**

#### **2.1. Basic data**

- Project name. Leading Issues in International Trade Relations -- Latin America.
- Country: Regional.
- Project Number: 03392.
- Amounts: C\$1,320,140.
- Date of Approval: March 1998 (First Phase).
- Duration: 36 Months (First Phase). CAP/RAP: C\$ 10,000/1,310,140.
- Recipient institution: Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, Argentina.
- Type of recipient institution: university.
- Type of beneficiary: research network.
- Intent of policy influence: international trade negotiations.
- Type of use of research: generation of knowledge, educational and political.
- Information source: project and interviews

#### **2.2. Objectives and areas of study<sup>4</sup>**

This project arose from a brainstorming session held at FLACSO in Buenos Aires in 1997, which laid the basis for the proposal that was subsequently submitted to IDRC for establishment of the LATN network.

---

<sup>4</sup> Excerpts from: "Leading Issues in International Trade Relations. Project Proposal", December 1997; "Second Technical Report", March 2000; "Final Technical Report", April 2000, and the LATN Web Page.

LATN's main goal is to conduct policy-oriented research on emerging issues in international trade relations.

LATN aims to:

- support the process of agenda-building and policy formulation in Latin American countries, in response to the emerging trends and issues in the international trade system;
- harness the existing research capacity in Latin American countries to engage in international trade negotiations and contribute to human resource development; and
- strengthen collaboration among the participating institutions with a view to sustaining the long-term goals of the network.

Studies being undertaken by LATN fall into three groups:

**Group 1** comprises overarching issues, such as the pre-conditions for trade coalitions to emerge; bargaining in the context of ever-changing coalitions; and the relationship between multilateralism and links among the multitude of regional integration initiatives that now exist.

**Group 2** involves the study of a range of emerging issues in world and regional trade agendas from a Latin American perspective, including: managing international investment; competition policy; services; telecommunications; financial services; export promotion; intellectual property rights; special and differential treatment; safeguards, countervailing and anti-dumping duties; dispute settlement; agriculture; the environment; and gender dimensions of the role of “cheap labour” in export success.

**Group 3** consists of country case studies that aim to identify optimal or feasible national responses in the context of the current international trade relations regime for Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

### 2.3 Organization, activities and results

LATN is coordinated by Dr Diana Tussie, a leading political economist specializing in international economic relations, and a small project staff based at the Buenos Aires office of FLACSO, a teaching and research organization with a presence in several countries in the region. The project's Advisory Committee comprises: Robert Devlin (Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)), Enzo Grilli (Johns Hopkins University), Patrick Low (World Trade Organization (WTO)), Patricio Meller (Universidad de Chile), José Antonio Ocampo (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)), and Rubens Ricupero (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)).

Results are being disseminated to a large audience of policymakers, researchers, and civil society organizations in the form of working papers and policy briefs, in printed form and on the LATN Website. Results are being discussed at national and international conferences and at meetings with policymakers and other stakeholders. Some meetings are held at key institutions including UNCTAD, the WTO and the IDB. It is expected that results will be published in two books: one will be a collection of country case studies and the other will comprise issue-based studies.

To date, outputs have succeeded in presenting regional or national perspectives on current trade issues.

Uptake in the research and policy communities has also been promising. Below are some early indications of the project's influence.

- At the national level, the network has been approached by various Latin American governments (Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, and several Central American countries) for assistance on trade negotiations.
- A number of organizations in the region have also contacted LATN for assistance on trade negotiations (The Andean Community, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, the Technical Committee of Mercosur, and the National Confederation of Industries from Brazil).
- The World Bank Institute has worked with LATN to customize its trade policy training courses for the region. Two courses have already been offered in Buenos Aires and Lima, which were attended by more than 70 trade negotiators, policymakers, researchers, and members of business and other civil society organizations. This effort has also been supported by UNCTAD through its Trade Diplomacy Program.
- UNCTAD and WTO representatives have said that they see LATN as a vehicle through which to develop collaboration between their organizations.

### **IDRC follow-up**

This project has become a prototype for similar (and inter-linked) endeavours that IDRC's Trade, Employment, and Competitiveness program initiative is supporting or intends to support in other developing regions (for instance, in South Asia and Southern Africa).

### **3. Objectives and use of results**

#### **3.1. The objectives as seen by the players**

By adopting the viewpoint of the players, the objectives of the project can be expanded and specified, as discussed below.

i. The principal objective was to create a tool to help Latin American countries position themselves more effectively in international trade negotiations<sup>5</sup>. In other words, it was hoped that the findings would be useful to national authorities in evaluating their manoeuvring room on each topic of the agenda, and assessing progress on those issues in the various negotiating forums.

Despite the knowledge and capacities at their disposal, Latin American countries were not organized or prepared to respond to the proposals of the North, which seemed to be backed by abundant research and strong political support. There was clearly no mechanism to help them in analyzing and discussing the positions they might take in the various and superimposed negotiations in which they were involved (in the World Trade Organization, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, the European Union, Mercosur).

In the face of these challenges, the larger countries have some capacity of their own to undertake research and analysis as a prelude to adopting positions. On the other hand, the smaller and medium-sized countries that have no such capacity could benefit from a regional mechanism that would provide them with an ordered set of ideas on the main issues of the multilateral agenda<sup>6</sup>.

ii. A complementary objective was to help Latin American countries to take a regional perspective towards the multilateral agenda of international trade negotiation issues, recognizing that there are issues that are common to the region, although they impact each country differently<sup>7</sup>. It is recognized that this is not an easy task, since the interests of different countries are not always the same for all issues, even the regional ones. In fact, there is constant tension: how to ensure that different countries can coordinate their

---

<sup>5</sup> The region's glaring lack of preparedness for dealing with the new challenges on the international scene was revealed in a 1997 paper prepared by a World Bank official, Alexander J. Yates, questioning the efficiency of Mercosur's performance. It was published the following year under the title, "Does Mercosur's Trade Performance Raise Concerns about the Effects of Regional Trade Arrangements?" (*The World Bank Economic Review*, January 1998, pp. 1-28).

<sup>6</sup> Part of the background to the project was a paper indicating the manoeuvring room that was left to countries in the wake of the Agreement on Agriculture from the Uruguay Round (1995). Its purpose was to explain what had been agreed. Diana Tussie, who wrote the paper, had headed two other networks before assuming the leadership of LATN. The thrust of her work in each case was the same: the international negotiations involving Latin America, her area of specialization. David Glover, the IDRC Program Officer, had done much to promote the network on Trade and Debt, and another on Trade and Environment.

<sup>7</sup> Such a perspective is all the more necessary since, generally speaking, the literature on these issues originates in the United States and from Europe. There is very little academically sound (i.e. other than journalistic) material dealing with trade issues as they affect Latin American countries.

efforts in multilateral trade negotiations on issues that involve them jointly and that can only be addressed on a regional basis?

The multilateral agenda is vast and complex. It is easy to lose oneself in a plethora of subjects and topics that must be recognized, defined and understood, in order to arrive at a negotiating position that will clearly identify the region's objectives.

iii. A further objective was to establish a coordination framework that would draw upon the national expertise of various regional institutions, in order to:

- Provide information on the main issues of the multilateral agenda, from a regional interests perspective.
- Take the viewpoint of government negotiators as the leading criterion in terms of priorities, the sequence of issues, the sequence of meetings, etc.

iv. A final objective was to have a political impact on policy formulation. In this respect, it was decided to design the research from the outset to take account of the information needs of policymakers and negotiators, even though there was no explicit demand for this type of information. From the beginning, it was insisted that the results of the research should be addressed to policymakers and negotiators.

Generally speaking, those interviewed felt that the problem defined as the central issue for the project was entirely appropriate<sup>8</sup>.

### **3.2. Changes in the objectives during the course of the project**

The original objectives of the project were not substantially modified, but they were adjusted in a number of instances over the course of the initial phase.

In terms of the main issues, agriculture was taken as the key one, followed by competition policy, and moving on to internationalization of multilateral trade rules, safeguard issues, antidumping, services and thereon successively. At the same time, the multilateral agenda itself betrayed a rather confused and shifting picture.

As to the approach, it was recognized, as the project proceeded, that it needed to be more technical, more clearly defined, and more focused on specific issues. This would mean changing the nature of the product, adapting it, updating it, and keeping it abreast of developments. The emphasis thus came to be placed on the policy formulation process, and on adapting it to the needs of the negotiators.

In terms of project execution, the initial idea of measuring margins of manoeuvre was more theoretical in its conception. Working papers were commissioned with a three-year

---

<sup>8</sup> Participants at the initial meeting in Buenos Aires were categorical in stressing the role played by Rohinton Medhora, who was at that time the IDRC Program Officer. It was he, they insisted, who recognized the timeliness of a problem that others did not consider very urgent. That was in 1997, at the end of the Uruguay Round under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

horizon, and these were to be followed by books. Yet it was soon found that three years was too long to wait for results. The negotiators needed information in real-time. The briefings were very timely and their user-friendliness meant that they were able to reach the negotiators better and more directly.

As it proceeded, LATN also revealed another need that must be addressed: education. The authorities were much less well informed than had been assumed in the original proposal. There, the central concern was the needs of the public sector in light of the fact that no one had given serious thought to the implications of having simultaneous negotiations ongoing in so many forums. Yet it was found that there was an immediate need for training in the public sector, since there were no inputs available in Spanish or with a Latin American perspective.

The changes that were introduced in this area turned out to be positive. They were expanded to include outreach aspects: courses with the researchers and public and private sector representatives, where the results of LATN's work were used.

Thus, the issue was redefined towards the end of the first phase of the project. LATN encouraged debate over the best way of reaching and influencing policymakers. This led to a recasting of the objective of the academic working papers, reflecting the gradual maturing of the network and the speed required by the decision-making process.

### **3.3. The use of the results**

LATN is basically a network of researchers. For this reason, the project placed the stress, from the beginning, on creating knowledge through research applied to policy formulation. At the same time, it was intended that these results should be usable for educating and informing policymakers and negotiators.

To examine the use that was made of the project's results, the seven-models scheme proposed by Weiss<sup>9</sup> was adopted. This analysis made it clear that the principal types of utilization were *knowledge generation* and *enlightenment*.

When it came to research performed within the government by its own technical staff, its uses were identified as "political" and tactical". The fact that such research was conducted "in-house" ruled out any possible means of influencing policy through advisory and consulting activities or from simply cooperating with civil society<sup>10</sup>.

---

<sup>9</sup> As explained in Neilson, S. "IDRC-Supported Research and Its Influence on Public Policy. Knowledge Utilization and Public Policy Processes: a Literature Review". IDRC, Ottawa, December 2001

<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, in one decision-making process it was found that the network's work had been used by the public sector to postpone decisions (uses of types 4 and 5). Two years ago, the Argentine Secretary of Trade had to deal with the footwear makers' lobby. They were upset by competitive imports from Brazil, and they attempted to lobby politicians to restrain those imports. Miguel Lengyel, Deputy Director of the LATN Network, was invited to participate in the discussion, on the basis of the paper that he had written on subsidies. The manufacturers were seeking protection and compensation. The Secretary of Trade used the domestic arguments (quality improvement, industrial restructuring, adaptation to international standards, etc.) from Lengyel's paper to defend himself against the footwear lobby's demands.



Following is a more detailed analysis of some of the evidence that backs up this conclusion.

### *3.3.1. Knowledge generation*

The original concern focused on the topics for research. The approach taken was typical of researchers: writing working papers and books, in hopes that they would be useful to their various target audiences.

The original project was intended to meet government needs with respect to international trade issues. To that end, the network maintained a prudent distance from national governments, positioning itself instead at the level of regional and international dialogue. It was thought that the network could contribute elements of discussion that would also be part of the regional debate, without portraying itself as a service provider, since it did not feel that it had the capacity to meet all demands at once.

- i. As a project, LATN does not invest heavily in trying to generate brand-new knowledge, nor was it designed as such. This was not its priority, nor its comparative advantage. Instead, it took up the output of other researchers and academics in areas relating to trade negotiations. Its principal advantage was that it knew how to position itself as a typical, average negotiator, and to select what was useful for application in a specific area: trade in services, agricultural negotiations, competition policy, etc.<sup>11</sup>. This positioning allowed it to build bridges to policymakers and negotiators.
- ii. Another aspect relating to the utilization of results was the finding that there was little knowledge to back up the handling of these topics in the negotiating rounds. This void sparked the need to feed the discussion with opinions about the consequences and implications of certain reforms that developed countries were proposing for Latin America. In this respect, it became clear that there was a range of subjects that could have a heavy impact but on which there was not much information available, since these were new and sometimes complex subjects<sup>12</sup>.
- iii. On the other hand, there was already a great deal of research available on various issues of trade policy: for example, analysis of the impacts from applying a certain kind

---

<sup>11</sup> The following example illustrates this point. Many interviewees noted that countries had no way to take stock of all the simultaneous negotiations they were involved in. To meet this gap, the network conducted country-specific case studies with which they were able to produce a “chart” of how the negotiations were going with each partner: WTO, FTAA, Andean Community, etc.. This revealed points of consensus as well as divergence. This in turn revealed the thinking of the main players, which led to interaction with the private sector, encouraging the search for implementation policies. There is no doubt that various activities were added and integrated: training courses, case studies, dialogue and interaction between the main players and the dissemination of documents.

<sup>12</sup> For example, the proposal for liberalizing services is important and there are many viewpoints, which means that topics have to be opened up and others added. In this respect, experience with the project demonstrated that it was important for negotiators to have different options available that they could apply in the negotiations. It was agreed that this was possible thanks to the analysis of the problem and the offering of some objective conclusions, highlighting the importance of certain aspects of the negotiation.

of strategy. Yet these analyses were prepared in very academic settings and they were not analyzed from the viewpoint of the decisions that negotiators must take today. In other words, the intent of LATN now was to apply this knowledge to the specific situation of a negotiator or policymaker.

iv. Finally, it is important to note the particular way that LATN had of looking at problems -- the "LATN trademark". This involved combining knowledge and making it available in a particular setting. To this end, approaches were taken from the literature and prioritized in a specific way, applying them to a specific issue in the negotiations. This combination included a component on the legal rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the policies pursued by the major trading blocs, the domestic interests of countries in the negotiations, etc.

LATN adopted a particular approach, which might be called that of "international political economy" or "international institutional political economy", with a combination of technical, legal, juridical and economic aspects. This could be considered as the project's own focus, created by LATN: academic knowledge applied specifically to a concrete setting.

### *3.3.2. The enlightenment effort*

In most Latin American countries, policy decisions are taken under the pressure of events in the negotiations. Consequently, there is seldom much possibility to take a considered perspective or to develop new ideas. This was the rationale behind the emphasis that the network placed on the education function.

Many interviewees made a particular point about the lack of familiarity with trade negotiation issues on the part of the political class in some countries<sup>13</sup>. Hence, the need to stress education, and to seek to instruct, enlighten and inform the governing class. Caplan's notion of two communities with no communication bridges was repeatedly evoked during the interviews<sup>14</sup>.

The education function has been very important. LATN has been placing growing stress on training, which it conducts in cooperation with other agencies. At this stage, it has become an important module of the project.

This emphasis can be justified in part by the recognition that international negotiations are labyrinthine in their complexity, and that even the players involved in them do not always see the full picture. At the same time, there is some confusion about the strategic meaning of the multilateral negotiations, which leads to the need to select, prioritize and examine those national issues that are considered most important.

### *3.3.3. Organization, coordination and outreach*

---

<sup>13</sup> It is recognized that many parliamentarians, senators, ministers and governors have not the slightest idea of these issues.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Neilson, op. cit.

There is no doubt that LATN produced knowledge and was instructive to the public authorities. But it did not limit itself to these activities: it also engaged in coordination and outreach activities, putting researchers in touch with users, as will be explained below.

- i. The organization of information was a prominent feature. The network succeeded in concentrating and organizing information on a single issue in a single place that was readily accessible.
- ii. Some international experiments never become “socialized” because there is no forum, no setting, where problems and experiences can be shared. In its role as coordinator, the network represented value added by facilitating access to this knowledge and encouraging researchers to work together on a given issue in different settings. This constituted additional help for the researchers, by making available to them the contributions and judgments of other researchers concerning the formulation of a given policy. The network has made intensive efforts at coordination and at identifying the resource represented by the accumulation of knowledge, so as to generate a type of product that is accessible to users.
- iii. LATN has placed considerable emphasis on communication, making information available to its members and to the general public, and cultivating linkages. Outreach activities made it possible to put the public sector in contact with the private, especially through the dissemination of materials that were accessible, concise and quickly readable, yet prepared by specialists. In this task, the intent was to combine rigorousness with accessibility.

#### **4. The policy formulation process**

The process of policy formulation differs among the four countries of the network in which the interviews were held. Nevertheless, there are some common features that are examined below. These relate to the decision-making process regarding trade negotiations, which is the central focus of the LATN project. Consequently, one should not draw conclusions from them about other areas of government affairs.

##### **4.1. The decision-making structure**

The process of policy formulation is structured around four key players:

- The Minister, Secretary or Undersecretary, positions of political responsibility that are subject to change in the governmental setting.
- External advisers drawn from a small circle of people who are known to those in positions of political responsibility.
- The private sector, which frequently lobbies and puts forward proposals for consideration by the authorities.

- Line personnel (non-administrative). These differ from “staff” personnel, who are primarily administrative, are subject to public service regulations, and enjoy the benefit of tenure.

Members of the academic community, researchers, technical experts and specialists, some of whom have written working papers for LATN, are included in this scheme as external advisers.

The roles played by each of these actors seem to follow a certain pattern:

- The Secretary of State is the one who takes the decision. In general, this is a hierarchical and vertical structure.
- The Secretary and the Undersecretary are responsible for implementing the decisions, and often act in coordination.
- External advisers provide technical reports in support of the work of the Secretary and the Undersecretary.
- Line personnel carry out the measures adopted and define the limits of what is possible in terms of implementing them.

The relative weight and role of each of these four players in decision-making will vary for each country, each circumstance, and each decision. It will also depend on the personality of the political player at the time<sup>15</sup>.

Despite the great variety of situations, it is possible to pose some systematic questions in the area of trade negotiations. There are two types of decisions: "principal" decisions and "instrumental" decisions. The first type defines a top-down process of policy formulation: at the pinnacle stands the Minister, or in effect the President, who takes decisions of a political nature. The second type, on the other hand, defines a bottom-up process by which proposals for implementing the policy are put to the decision makers for consideration.

- Generally speaking, the initial decision to get involved in a negotiation is a political rather than technical one. For example, the decision to join Mercosur will be a political decision, as will the decision to join the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). These decisions are taken at the executive level, through the Ministries of Economy and Foreign Relations. At this level, the possibilities of exerting influence are very limited or virtually nonexistent, until the principal decision has been taken.

---

<sup>15</sup> An example of this is former Argentine Minister Cavallo. He had a very peculiar and strong personality, and he tended to take decisions abruptly and on his own, while letting others worry about how to implement them. His decision-making style was highly vertical, and he was quite selective about whom they would benefit and whom they would hurt, leaving it to his advisers to justify the measures taken. There may have been some logic to the way he selected sectors, but it was not readily apparent and his decisions were difficult to justify and to implement.

- During the negotiating process there will be various decisions of the instrumental type concerning the options for implementing the decision taken. These are more technical questions, involving the technical officials of the public sector. Those officials will put forward recommendations, suggestions and options to the decision makers, complete with cost-benefit analysis and advice from sectoral experts, the private sector, NGOs and representatives of civil society. At the same time, the state bureaucracy will be intervening.

Depending on the decisions that are taken in the course of the negotiations, the principal decision may undergo some amendments. In fact, while the ultimate destination may be clearly defined, the road that must be taken to get there can actually change that destination<sup>16</sup>.

Looking at the internal decision-making process in this way reveals two significant features:

- a) The decision is taken from a very narrow field of alternatives among which the Minister must select, with the help of his advisory staff.
- b) It defines a very important sphere of influence, which consists in shaping the agenda and constraining the Minister's manoeuvring room with decisions from the bottom-up.

Moreover, the evidence collected shows that the process is not entirely vertical. There is in fact a process of mediation between the different players, which means that the final decision reflects a complex interplay between decision makers, private sector representatives, and line personnel.

The case of Brazil offers a good illustration of these questions. Brazil has a formidable international negotiating apparatus, based in the Foreign Ministry (Itamaraty)<sup>17</sup>. Brazil also has a clearly defined national trade policy, which it pursues with great consistency. Many consider this the model that should be adopted.

Despite this, several policy formulation models coexist in Brazil, which suggests that it is impossible to construct a universal model that will be valid for all countries. In some cases, for example the Ministry of Communications, decisions are taken by a very tight circle of individuals who enjoy the President's confidence. They will then turn the decision over to technical staff to implement it and draft the decrees. This process is neither porous nor transparent, and leaves very little room for other sectors to participate.

---

<sup>16</sup> For example, differences over which sectors will be excluded from any treaty between the EU and Mercosur could in the end sabotage the agreement. Or the number of exceptions could be so great as to alter the principal decision substantially.

<sup>17</sup> Brazil maintains a permanent team of 12 in Geneva and publishes a monthly report on the negotiations. Moreover, its negotiators in the field are in permanent contact with M. de Paiva Abreu and P. de Motta Veiga, members of the LATN network, who are recognized specialists in the issues on the multilateral agenda

On the other hand, the Ministry of Science and Technology provides an example of a decisional process that is very open to intervention by the academic community. Measures are proposed from the bottom-up through the participation of commissions and working groups that process and develop proposals discussed in the committees (consisting of businesspeople, technicians, workers, academics, users, etc.), percolating up through the structure to the decision-making point. In comparison with the telecommunications sector, this organization is much more porous and transparent.

There are, then, two different profiles to the policy formulation process, surviving and coexisting together, even as they undergo changes with each new administration or Minister.

#### **4.2. The power of the negotiating bureaucracy.**

The international negotiations that Latin American countries have participated in for many years have produced a bureaucracy of negotiators. Despite the turnover of administrations, the officials who conduct these negotiations remain the same, as they do in other countries. They amount to a self-perpetuating body of officials in these functions<sup>18</sup>.

Their positioning within the negotiating process gives them the possibility of influencing decisions, and dragging out or speeding up the negotiations. In general, they rely in their work on technical arguments provided by their ministries' technical experts, and in some cases by outside advisers.

The FTAA is a good example to illustrate this point. It represents, in effect, a negotiation among bureaucrats, where the political authority is at a disadvantage. Once the decision is taken, it is the permanent staff of the Ministries of Economy and Foreign Relations who are called in. In reality this means line personnel, and not the advisers, since it is the former who are familiar with the issues and who prepare the status reports on the negotiations and on the options available for selection.

Another characteristic of this bureaucracy is that it is open to influence, because this works in their favour. In this case, the player wants to be influenced, and he will subsequently be able to claim as his own the ideas that he is pursuing in the negotiations.

#### **4.3. The influence of line personnel**

When an adviser is brought into government, he is obliged to make contact with the line personnel.

---

<sup>18</sup> Diana Tussie, Director of LATN, participated in the negotiations on the Mercosur common external tariff. She points out that her presence attracted attention because hers was the only new face, while all the others knew each other from previous negotiations.

- It is these officials who are familiar with the details of the negotiation, and this gives them a significant role in the negotiating process. The fact that they have been in their position for so long make them indispensable.
- They mark off the limits of what is possible. Their wealth of knowledge allows them to block some measures that might be inconsistent with previous positions. Sometimes this attitude is helpful. At other times, it is a mechanism for impeding and obstructing the implementation of decisions.
- Most newly-arrived advisers are unfamiliar with the rules and procedures, and it is very difficult to tell whether they are working in defence of a bureaucratic interest, their own interest, or that of some industry that is paying for their services.

These characteristics produce a kind of negotiating exercise between permanent line personnel and the advisers who come and go with the appointment of each Minister.

Over time it may be possible to overcome these attitudes, but chronic instability makes such an outcome less likely<sup>19</sup>: indeed, these characteristics are empowered by instability. The greater the instability, the greater the power of line personnel, who can drag their feet at no cost themselves. Given the pressures that constantly build up for taking short-term emergency measures, the structure is highly dependent on these people and they must be duly taken into account<sup>20</sup>. Their control over information gives them great weight and it is largely through this control that middle-ranking bureaucrats perpetuate their power.

What this means is that line personnel also have the power to determine the policy formulation process. They exercise this power by throwing up obstacles, employing delaying tactics, and rewriting the final resolutions for implementing the decisions. They have a very high measure of discretion and, depending on the circumstances, they can even modify the principal decision in part.

#### **4.4. High turnover and volatility**

In the various countries there is a high degree of turnover in the teams responsible for conducting the negotiations, especially among the positions of ministers, secretaries and advisers.

---

<sup>19</sup> The dramatic reforms that were made during Cavallo's first ministry were possible because he was in place for five years. Yet nine months into his second ministry, he found that he could no longer count on some of the line personnel. Instability set in: with so many departures and arrivals the learning process had to start all over. The most successful cases would seem to be those where the entire process can be accomplished within the term of a single administration.

<sup>20</sup> The following comment was typical of their view: "I know how to do things, and yet I have to follow orders from these guys, who arrived yesterday and will be gone tomorrow". In fact, the impression has taken root among these people that the measures they must implement are wrongheaded, because they were proposed by parvenus to the public sector.

This turnover can have consequences of varying magnitude on the policy formulation process.

- a) Turnover generates volatility, which works to the detriment of decisions already adopted. In effect, the technical staff move with the issues. When a national representative withdraws from the negotiations, the issues go with him. The replacement team will have other priorities -- they will drop the old issues and move on to new ones.
- b) The constant rotation of government teams interrupts the policy formulation process, and this means that there is no one responsible for thinking strategically within government<sup>21</sup>. It is common to find that, once the administration's term is up, the technical staff disappears and things have to start again from scratch<sup>22</sup>.
- c) This leads to a dual situation where there exists outside the public sector a capacity for strategic thinking but without specific financing (universities, research institutes), while others have financing that is far from disinterested (think tanks).
- d) There is a confrontation of interests. On one hand, there are the technicians who are interested in continuing as freelancers, charging high fees to perform consulting contracts for governments with the support of international agencies; on the other hand, those same funds could help to keep stable teams in place within the government itself.

The result of this confrontation is to hobble the government's autonomy and to leave the field wide-open for lobbyists.

There are some factors that serve to temper the negative fallout from high turnover.

- i. There is a sharp difference when it comes to the diplomatic corps of the Foreign Ministry. In this case, stability is much higher than in the rest of the public sector. This is a ministry where academic training ensures a steady career path, with the expectation of regular promotion through a predictable structure. This generates greater professionalism and lower turnover, but it also produces a body of officials who are strongly resistant to change.
- ii. There is a very high turnover rate among advisers, but in terms of influence the cumulative effect is not dissipated. Technical staff who leave the government often come back after a time. From this viewpoint, the training they have received is not wasted.
- iii. A change of Minister and advisers does not necessarily mean a change in policy. When it comes to trade negotiation issues in particular, many decisions are inherited and

---

<sup>21</sup> A country's relationship with international agencies can sometimes collapse because there is no replacement to maintain communication.

<sup>22</sup> In some cases, the teams that participated in Mercosur negotiations continued to work on the same issues. Although some of their members were now outside government, they maintained their ties and pursued their thinking on international negotiation issues. Indeed, the LATN network played an important role in sustaining this continuity.



there is a large permanent staff, which means that the consequences are less harmful for the continuity of the process.

iv. On the other hand, the middle-level negotiating teams are not so affected by instability. In fact there is a rare degree of continuity in the implementation of decisions, i.e. from the decision of the Minister downwards.

#### **4.5. Institutional-bureaucratic disputes**

The study demonstrated that there are other factors impacting the policy formulation process. It seems that there is no clearly defined distribution of responsibilities among the different institutional components of the process, and this generates problems of coordination among the different divisions of the public sector.

- In some cases, the problem lies in the institutional distribution of issues between the Foreign Ministry and the other ministers. Generally speaking, economic ministries deal with tariff policy and the treatment of foreign investment.
- In other cases, trade policy is two-headed. On one hand stands the Trade Department in the Ministry of the Economy, and on the other hand the Trade Division of the Foreign Ministry. The latter group is likely to differ from the economic ministry in its thinking about major issues, and this produces conflicts and sharpens bureaucratic jealousies.
- There is a lack of coordination among the various units of the public sector, with sometimes divergent decisions based on two or three different diagnoses. These disputes between the machineries of the different ministries are often resolved in favour of those that have the best lobby.

#### **4.6. Outreach strategies**

LATN used various media for disseminating project results. This section looks at the strategy that was adopted. It was designed to articulate the target groups, the characteristics of the policy formulation process, and the means employed. This articulation is all the more necessary because of the great number of institutions, issues and decisions that are involved in trade negotiations, making it difficult to define the specific area to which project results should be addressed.

##### *4.6.1. Target groups*

The target groups constituted a heterogeneous audience consisting of:

- Players whose origins lie in research, studies, consulting, and individuals with the potential to hold public office of some significance.

- Players at the intermediate level who conduct the negotiations and sit on the negotiating committees. They remain in office for extended periods, and it is they who shape the day-to-day agenda.
- The permanent middle-level officials of ministries who deal with trade issues.
- The advisers to these middle-level officials, a slightly more heterogeneous group that includes academics who provide them with services. It also includes advisers who are not academics, but rather experts with practical experience.
- Networks interested in trade policy issues.
- In some cases, Secretaries and Undersecretaries, in the hope that knowledge will filter upwards to the highest strata of government<sup>23</sup>.

It is clear that the Coordination Unit felt it best to direct the results of its activities to middle management and not to politicians or the government's senior policy officials. It is the middle ranks that control data and process information, and this gives them important power, even with the Minister and his advisers.

On the other hand, the confusion of roles is again apparent in this case. At a given moment the target person may be a researcher, at another moment he may be serving as an adviser to some important official, or he may even have become a senior official himself. Indeed, a single member of the policymaking community may combine all these roles<sup>24</sup>.

#### 4.6.2. *Means used*

The principal means used were:

- Working papers.
- Policy briefing papers.
- Books.
- Web site.
- National and international conferences.
- Training courses.
- Meetings with policymakers and other stakeholders.
- Newsletters.
- Consultancies.
- The working papers were reserved for the policymakers, but they did not function satisfactorily. They were too long and too hard to read. They were written for an academic audience, and were published in English with a Spanish translation. They were used in courses as part of the bibliography. They constituted more of a framework than an influence in itself.

---

<sup>23</sup> In small and medium-sized countries especially, seeking to position themselves strategically in certain negotiations.

<sup>24</sup> It is frequently the case that before becoming a minister a person may have been a researcher or an academic. Others were previously deputies, senators or governors.

- The books were difficult to read and demanded time that their intended audience frequently did not have available. They represented a resource that was very hard to absorb. They increasingly revealed themselves to be poor instruments for conveying ideas and they showed that it was necessary to reduce their size and convert them into simple academic communications.
- Dissemination through briefings was fully successful<sup>25</sup>. These are short publications, targeted at specific issues. The briefings managed to get information to negotiators in real-time. Readable in a short time, and limiting their use of technical jargon, they proved to be very appropriate for meeting the needs of increasingly fast-paced negotiations involving various discussion forums.

At the same time as the briefings were being put together, it was recognized that knowledge had to be disseminated in another manner. Instead of a paper, with a relevant conclusion, the idea was to generate briefings containing "on-the-spot knowledge".

- The meetings were useful for bringing the different players together. They involved representatives of the Ministry of the Economy, the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Agriculture and the private sector (business chambers, labour unions) and LATN researchers, as well as academics from various disciplines. They provided opportunities for joint thinking. As well, the training courses operated more like workshops.
- Thanks to e-mail and the web site, selected information could be retrieved for dealing with concrete problems, and studies on different issues could be tracked and searched.

The combination of all these means made it possible to cover a very broad spectrum of audiences. Yet the interviews revealed that, in practice, there were two other means of outreach and influence.

- One of these had to do with personal relations. Generally speaking, political actors are unaware of the origin of their arguments and they make no mention of the source or inspiration for the measures they are defending. This behaviour makes it difficult to identify the medium through which ideas are disseminated. Yet it was found that in many cases, personal contact between policymakers and researchers played a fundamental role.

In some cases, communication was generated through direct participation in the negotiations by members of the network<sup>26</sup>. In other cases, it was through ongoing contact with the daily work of negotiators and the ministry officials. This personal link between

---

<sup>25</sup> Demand for them is high and they are frequently reprinted.

<sup>26</sup> In some cases, the researcher assumed the role of negotiator, demonstrating that through close contact with the negotiators it was possible to influence decisions directly.

a researcher and the policymaker or negotiator was judged to be the most important and effective means of outreach.

- The second one refers to the mass media such as the press and television that were used by members of the network, but independent from it. The opinion columns of newspapers helped to shape public opinion on trade negotiation issues. Television, for its part, made it possible to reach out to the general public directly and to discuss extremely complex issues in accessible language.

## **5. Influence on policy formulation**

### **5.1. Conceptual aspects**

What does it mean to "have influence"? One accepted meaning regards "influence" as success in changing some government policy, program, measure or action. Yet such a definition has been found to be too restrictive, too narrow and unfairly severe in judging the impact that research can have on government actions.

A second accepted meaning treats influence more broadly, regarding it as a continuum, with a direct impact at one extreme and a general conceptual change at the other<sup>27</sup>.

As proposed by Lindquist, the types of influence can be arranged in the following order:<sup>28</sup>

- Expanding policy capacities.
- Broadening policy horizons.
- Affecting policy regimes.

### **5.2. Types of influence**

From the evidence compiled during the interviews, the project achieved impact through all three types of influence. The greatest impact, however, was concentrated in the first two.

Following is a discussion of some aspects relating to the predominant components of this classification, in decreasing order of importance.

#### *Improving the knowledge/data of certain actors*

- The project results helped to increase the analytical capacity of public officials in dealing with trade negotiation issues. Generally speaking, negotiators do not view these issues from an academic standpoint. Thanks to the project, they came to see that there was more to their task than simply fulfilling negotiating

---

<sup>27</sup> Krastev, I., quoted in Neilson, S., IDRC, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> Lindquist, E. Discerning Policy Influence: Framework for a Strategic Evaluation of IDRC-Supported Research, page 24

objectives, and they began to concern themselves with the implications of the international normative framework. The information provided by the network opened their eyes to a more global approach.

- The activities pursued under the project have helped to create a climate highlighting trade negotiation issues, and this has helped certain initiatives to prosper at the political level<sup>29</sup>.
- The project lent concrete content to the main problems facing the international economy. In this respect, the briefings were considered extremely useful as a means of dissemination.<sup>30</sup>

It is clear that knowledge was generated and disseminated, and that this increased the availability of information on relevant issues.

*Introducing new concepts to frame debates, putting ideas on the agenda, or stimulating public debate*

Neoliberalism in one or other of its forms is the dominant current in Latin America today. LATN researchers do not belong to this orthodox mainstream. Because they do not share the dominant ideas, it is difficult to detect their presence in economic decisions taken in the region. Yet despite the difficulties in tracing their influence, their activities have brought forth ideas that expanded the policy options available to middle-level officials in their daily work.<sup>31</sup>

The way influence is exerted in this case is through a shift in the public debate about the negotiations. Questions that were previously ignored are beginning to be raised, and for those issues on which the network focuses its efforts the agenda is becoming broader.<sup>32</sup>

Influence can be considered in two dimensions:

- It opens up a spectrum of different alternatives by adding new options to the menu<sup>33</sup>.

---

<sup>29</sup> In Peru, for example, one can no longer talk about agrarian policy without referring to the WTO agriculture agreement and the FTAA negotiations. The same goes for the multilateral context of telecommunications policy. University graduates are now familiar with the WTO and the Multifibre Agreement.

<sup>30</sup> For example, information on what the WTO allows and what it prohibits with regard to promoting exports is an important consideration for a policymaker or negotiator. Similarly, knowing which mechanisms have worked out well, and which have failed, is important in a world that has become highly complex, and where few public officials are well versed in the international constraints on what can and cannot be done.

<sup>31</sup> The influence that LATN may exert on policy formulation can be evaluated in the following terms: assuming that the government has one option, the main influence that LATN can exert is to pose another option.

<sup>32</sup> This could explain the new interest in normative questions, which were long relegated to the background by the preoccupation with the mutual granting of concessions.

- It opens up a topic, adding other questions that are obscured by the main issue<sup>34</sup>. By opening up the problem, the network showed that policy was not the only thing that mattered, and that negotiation was also important.

The research helped to place the recipient of the influence in a better position to appreciate his problem, to order his thoughts, to distinguish among the available options as to which were feasible, and which were most desirable. Clarifying the problems in this way helped more in terms of taking positions than proposing specific solutions. Thus, while the performance capacity of the negotiators was expanded, there was also a gradual shift in conceptual thinking, and therefore in policies.

The project also contributed to the transparency of policy, to the extent that it helped to publicize the content of the trade negotiations. Disseminating these contents had an automatic impact, as relevant players received information and reacted to it. Two situations could be discerned here:

- Access to policymakers can alter their decision in one direction or another, if the new information they receive leads them to consider aspects that they had not previously taken into account.
- Sometimes this process is reversed: publicity about what is being negotiated, what is going on in the world, and what countries, are doing can inspire other relevant players to enter the fray and exert influence to amend, block or support a given course of action.<sup>35</sup>

*Providing opportunities for networking/learning within the jurisdiction or with colleagues elsewhere*

The network fostered interaction that facilitated the understanding of situations elsewhere in Latin America, and the forging of ties with other colleagues in the region.

These activities created quite a different platform for discussing the problems. On one hand, it brought together various types of expertise: policymakers, public sector, private sector, each with a different focus and approach. On the other hand, it was marked by a degree of freedom not to be found in conventional discussions of these issues. Generally, when negotiators explain their position they must make clear in advance the status of the opinions they are expressing (whether in their personal capacity, as an official of the Foreign Ministry or the Ministry of Economy, etc.). In contrast, network participants are

---

<sup>33</sup> An example can be found in the negotiations involving free zones and intellectual property. In this case, LATN's influence was to add one more option to the menu available to policymakers and negotiators.

<sup>34</sup> At a meeting held in Buenos Aires as part of the network's activities, participants reported that they had discovered another aspect of the problem, one that they had not recognized before, and those present admitted that this constituted policy influence. This facilitated dialogue among policymakers in two different ministries of the same government. The information was a component of influence, but so was the new vision of the problem that was now in play. Clearly, these effects are very difficult to pin down.

<sup>35</sup> An understanding of successes and failures of other countries can help to avoid making similar mistakes, as well as expanding manoeuvring room in the negotiations.

not bound by the same rule, and they can contribute more substantively to debate on the issues.

#### *Developing new talent for research and analysis*

This area involved training targeted at policymakers, negotiators, middle-level officials, and private sector representatives. In the academic field, a new course on the Economics of Integration was added to the curriculum, inspired by the LATN project<sup>36</sup>. At the same time, graduate students were encouraged to devote their thesis work to the issues that the network was studying.

New academic researchers were trained, prominent among whom were the members of the LATN Coordination Unit.

#### *Stimulating quiet dialogue among decision makers and among or with researchers*

The holding of forums and seminars with policymakers, researchers and private sector representatives created settings for the discussion and exchange of substantive ideas on the international trade negotiations.

### **5.3. Principal actors influenced**

The results of the project were transmitted by different means to various audiences. The following section reviews some of the principal actors who, judging from the evidence collected, were influenced by LATN activities.

#### *Ministers and high-ranking politicians*

Through the papers that were prepared at the request of these players, the network prepared proposals on various issues. The personal contacts that researchers made with these players constituted a very important channel of communication.

#### *Policymakers and negotiators*

The documents prepared by LATN regularly came to the attention of policymakers, who took them as the basis for defining key aspects of the negotiations<sup>37</sup>. Being able to deal directly with policymakers and members of Congress allowed network members to discuss concrete proposals relating to the negotiations.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> In these courses, policymakers from various ministries and from the private sector are invited to give lectures and lead discussions.

<sup>37</sup> Issues relating to services negotiations in Peru, for example.

<sup>38</sup> In Argentina, the Secretary of Industry and his two undersecretaries took part in discussions on the position that Argentina should adopt in the WTO negotiations. Foreign Ministry personnel who were closely involved in the international negotiations frequently attended events organized by LATN.

On several occasions, a conceptual link could be traced between the information provided by LATN and its application to specific cases<sup>39</sup>. The network also responded to many requests for documentation and information on trade negotiation issues. There is evidence that the materials were used in deciding questions for which the policymakers had no experience or background.

#### *Middle-level managers*

Influence at the middle-management level of the public sector was exerted through training courses, seminars and forums. The strategy was differentiated in order to achieve a functional impact on each target group.

#### *Researchers and academics*

As noted earlier, trade negotiation issues have been included in the course of study in universities and other educational centres. Graduate students at the master's and doctoral levels have undertaken research on these topics for their thesis preparation. The number of seminars, conferences and other events on university campuses has risen substantially. At the same time, the network's web site serves as a tool for updating academic bibliographies for the teaching activity of LATN members and other teachers.

#### *Private sector*

In this case, the influence was essentially educational, through efforts to inform and to publicize issues in a prioritized and organized manner. These efforts had more influence on business groups (e.g. industry, banking, tourism associations), than on professional advisers in the private sector. It was transmitted primarily through the participation of these players in events organized by LATN.

#### *Public opinion in general*

Influence was exerted through newspaper columns, TV programs, discussion groups and conferences. Researchers also had access to legislators, and were constantly consulted by parliamentary commissions. Finally, political parties turned to the network in search of information and knowledge.

### **6. Methods and mechanisms of exerting influence**

It is very difficult to identify a case of influence and to trace it back to the relationship that originated it. This section attempts to analyze the mechanisms through which influence operates. It starts by differentiating direct from indirect influence. This distinction is not always easy to make, although some cases are quite clear. Among other difficulties, there is the fact that actors' relationships with the academic and the political

---

<sup>39</sup> When it came to preparing background analysis for reforming Argentina's anti-dumping and subsidy countervail legislation, the network's studies and its Web site were used as sources of information and ideas. The network's contribution at this stage was rated very highly.



worlds are not limited to their links with LATN. This means that the influences detected cannot be attributed exclusively to the project.

### **6.1. Direct influence**

This can happen in three ways:

- Appointment to positions of political responsibility.
- Personal relationships.
- Specific consulting contracts

#### *6.1.1. Appointment to positions of political responsibility*

In this case, the actor becomes a policy maker and the influence is exerted directly in the course of his duties.

Two models or views of the mechanisms that link research with policy development arose from the interviews.

a) The first view considers it undesirable, from the viewpoint of knowledge generation, for academic researchers to be placed in positions of political responsibility. For knowledge to be properly generated and accumulated, the process must meet the tests of dedication, rigor and specialization. Accepting political office is seen as a deviation from the model that should govern the production, dissemination and application of knowledge in any society.

This view starts with a division of labour. Some players are technically equipped to produce sound studies, generate knowledge, and make it available to society through various means of dissemination. It is possible for researchers to influence policies, then, by transferring the knowledge they generate, without the need to place them in positions of political responsibility. Under this model, each participant in the process has a clearly delimited field of activity.

b) The second view is that people who enter into the public service bring with them the knowledge derived from their research.

This model distinguishes two levels: knowledge as object, and knowledge incorporated into the subject. The knowledge that an individual accumulates through research work allows him to establish a series of personal and professional contacts, to achieve a certain local or international status, and to acquire experience and practical expertise in the course of his research activities. This actor carries all of these elements with him. When research is performed, there are two outputs: the paper, and the resulting enrichment of human capital. In modern societies, increasing the researcher's human capital surely takes precedence over the paper.

A person who is the carrier of research results will have the greatest opportunity for influence if he accedes to a position of political responsibility. That is where influence will make itself felt, because this actor is accustomed to producing knowledge, to thinking about issues from a different viewpoint. Yet it is not only the content that is important, but also the training and the knowledge that are acquired through the practice of research, and that will now be put to the service of policy formulation.

The fact that influence makes itself felt in this way might be explained by the lack of a division of labour between the private and public sector. The studies that government should be producing are in fact taken on by projects such as the LATN network. If things were different, a person coming into government from the academic world would not be so important.

In Latin America it is frequent for positions of political responsibility within government (ministers of education, the economy, industry and so on) to be filled by members of the academic world.<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, it has been found that models based on France's *Ecoles des Hautes Etudes* do not work very well in the region. In these countries, the process is disrupted: there is a degree of division and specialization of labour, but it is embryonic. Researchers are academics, policymakers and consultants simultaneously.

Consequently, the funding of research that helps to increase an individual's human capital will only bear fruit if that person becomes a significant player in the public sector. There is a significant component of externality here, which is human capital formation. To a large extent, the person best equipped to disseminate research results is the researcher himself. The impact comes through the generation of knowledge, but also through the person who generates and carries that knowledge.<sup>41</sup>

This viewpoint limits the force of the argument that the main reasons why research has little or no influence on public policy have to do with problems of dialogue, the lack of articulation, or the absence of bridges between research and policy formulation. The two communities mentioned by Caplan may not be the most appropriate concept for illustrating this phenomenon<sup>42</sup>. Here there is no such distinction between the two communities. The sad thing is that these two communities have very important roles to play, yet in these countries they do not play them.

---

<sup>40</sup> For example, the Economic Research Corporation for Latin America (CIEPLAN) in Chile has placed many policymakers in positions of senior responsibility in successive Chilean governments since the restoration of democracy.

<sup>41</sup> As one interviewee put it, the broad options in terms of integration, e.g. NAFTA vs. Mercosur, can only be understood and resolved by a person who is trained and equipped to do so. In Latin America such training can be acquired in a lobby-supported think tank, in the World Bank, in the IMF, or by doing research in specialized institutions. There is no other place, because the university, which should be another alternative, does not exist.

<sup>42</sup> See Neilson, S., op. cit.

Finally, it must be understood that the policy influence of research will be effective if, when it comes to exercising public functions, these individuals make use of the results of the research in which they participated. In other words, the placement of academic researchers in positions of political responsibility will represent a valid form of policy influence, if the player in fact makes use of the knowledge produced in the project for performing his new role and if he takes decisions based precisely on the knowledge obtained in the course of the project. Clearly, this is very difficult to prove and identify.

- The case of the LATN Director, Diana Tussie, was a point of reference for all the interviewees.

This person is widely known in Argentina as a trade policy expert with extensive previous experience, who conducts research and is very professional in monitoring international trade issues. In this case, the fundamental form of influence resided in her unique personality. To this one must add her personal relationship with the Secretary of Trade, Debora Giorgi, who held that position at the time Dr. Tussie was serving as Undersecretary.

This represented a fortuitous but highly favourable and exceptional circumstance in a key strategic area. As a bearer of technical skills and knowledge, she came to the Trade Department equipped with the attributes of influence. She acceded to a position of political responsibility in a key decision-making area, through the force of her own personality and because LATN was in full gestation. Together with M. Lengyel and C. Quiliconi, both from the LATN Coordination Unit, she exerted enormous influence in the Trade Department. The LATN team had access to decision makers at the highest level.

#### *6.1.2. Personal relationships*

Personal relationships between LATN researchers and policymakers have had some unexpected impacts that go well beyond what was anticipated at the project's conception. Generally speaking, direct influence came essentially through personal relationships, which have been considered as a key factor of the capacity to influence.

Two components must be distinguished here:

- The academic background, which lends support, legitimacy and recognition. Together with these factors, personal relationships can make an academic researcher into an influential player. The extent of the person's career history, as the guarantee of his knowledge and expertise, is viewed together with the level he has achieved in his professional life. These factors giving credibility and maturity to his viewpoints and opinions. The opinions expressed by an actor with this kind of background are treated as very important.
- Personal networking, relationships with individuals who have been building their biographies over many years. The mechanism of access through personal relationships includes specific questions to which the public sector needs answers,

either formally through consulting contracts, or by means of concrete requests by the minister or another senior official.

In some cases, personal contact comes as a result of having performed a consulting contract for the government: when a policymaker sees the usefulness of what he has received from the researcher, a relationship begins to develop. The academic work is recognized as useful in the policymaker's daily activities. The interaction with information consumers, thanks to that consulting work, generates a relationship that in future will make him an indispensable adviser for that issue<sup>43</sup>.

When it comes to direct influence of the kind exerted through personal relations, the means of dissemination (briefings, working papers, books, newspaper articles and such) play a different role. Rather than mere means for conveying knowledge and information to certain audiences, they show that these researchers are well-informed and that they know the issues in-depth, thereby reinforcing their image as indispensable specialists whom the policymakers must consult<sup>44</sup>.

### *6.1.3. Specific consulting contracts*

As noted above, it is difficult to find concrete evidence of influence and to trace it back to its originating mechanism. Yet in the case of a specific policy problem to which a solution is sought through hiring a consultant, the influence is direct and obvious.

Nevertheless, on some occasions, when governments turn to academic researchers, this does not always involve a formal consulting contract against payment of fees. In these cases it is difficult to identify either the degree or the form of influence. Generally, what happens is that ministers, secretaries and undersecretaries will receive confidential or restricted-distribution documents from academics, researchers, technical experts whom they have consulted on a specific problem. Sometimes the author is not even identified in the document: this information is known only to the politician who commissioned it<sup>45</sup>.

In Brazil, this method of influence is very powerful. In many areas of government, the bureaucracy is not very highly qualified, and so the universities play an important role.

---

<sup>43</sup> An outstanding example of influence is the paper on the revival of Mercosur, in which members of the LATN network and the Mercosur network were involved. They wrote the basic documents themselves and these were then approved by the Mercosur authorities. Another example was the pressure to institutionalize and constitute the Arbitration Tribunal. These proposals were explicitly reflected in the agreements that were signed.

<sup>44</sup> This point applies, for example, to members of the LATN Coordination Unit. In particular, M. Lengyel, with his work on subsidies, and V. Delich, on dispute settlement, have become respected advisers on these issues. They are constantly receiving telephone inquiries, they are quoted at informal departmental meetings, they communicate personally about their work.

<sup>45</sup> An example of this was a consulting study on the Manaus free zone. The Brazilian Department of Commerce asked a member of LATN to provide advice on this point, but requested that the memo should not include all the arguments, since it wanted to reserve some for negotiation. The memo was classed as confidential by the Department. Comparing its contents with the outcome of the negotiation, the coincidence is clear. The results of the negotiation arose directly from the memo, and not from any briefing or working paper, even though that source was never made public.

The government contracts for consulting services and studies with the universities, and this contributes to their economic support. Track record is a decisive element in a consultant's selection. This phenomenon reflects a long-standing tradition in the relations between the government and the universities. In other words, there is a direct relationship, a crucial bridge, and this has increased the influence of the academic world in Brazil.

Interviewees mentioned several cases of direct influence through consulting contracts.

- In Brazil, the rationalization of export financing rules by the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES) during the trade negotiations with the European Union (EU). The government accepted the proposal for Brazil's offer made by a member of the network. Another example: definition of the Brazilian position for a possible agreement with Mexico on market access, services, etc.<sup>46</sup>
- In Argentina, members of the LATN Coordination Unit had a direct influence through the advice they provided on export issues and on dispute settlement in international agreements. Another example was the consulting contract on agriculture in 1999 (pre-Seattle), at which time two manuals were prepared: the first explaining existing agricultural agreements to Argentine negotiators, and the second analyzing all the issues on the agriculture negotiations table from the agenda for the upcoming Seattle round.
- In Venezuela, the member of the network is an adviser to the government.
- In Chile, another member of LATN is also a government negotiator on services.

## **6.2. Indirect influence**

Admitting that the "research-policymaker axis" is limited, other parameters must be used to measure the results of research: one such parameter is capacity building. According to this view, the indirect repercussions are the most important. Another dimension of this question relates to the time it takes society to absorb scientific discoveries and breakthroughs. The expectation is that repercussions will come in the future, and not immediately. It may take many years after someone has sown the seeds before they translate into policy. Sewing seeds is useful over the long term. The maturation period is probably shorter in developed countries. While there is no doubt that studies are influential, it is generally accepted that their influence is felt over the medium term, and never immediately.

### *6.2.1. Dissemination of documents*

---

<sup>46</sup> The interviewee, a member of LATN, is an adviser to Brazil's negotiating groups through his role as consultant to the National Confederation of Industries (CNI). The thrust of his papers generally coincides with the positions taken by the various business sectors.

In general, if an idea is well founded and soundly presented it will be recognized as such by its target audience, and is likely to be adopted. The problem is that reading skills are very low in many countries of the region. This means that a dissemination strategy is a very important component of influence.

With respect to target audiences, influence depended primarily on two factors: the Secretary of the moment, and the current phase of the negotiation. It was confirmed that Advisers or National Directors of ministries would make use of this documentation if it coincided with the issues on which they were working.

With respect to the type of document used for dissemination, the briefings were evaluated as the most useful, because they were more "reader-friendly" and had a more direct message.

Together with the working papers they were aimed at a different audience, one that did not include the main players. In effect, ministers and secretaries did not read them. They were sent instead to the intermediate levels of government, academic sectors, the private sector. In terms of the means of indirect influence, special importance was attached to newspaper articles, although it is difficult to demonstrate if the ideas contained in them were accepted.<sup>47</sup>

Some examples of indirect influence:

- In some cases, influence took the form of ideas and texts copied from LATN documents, which were used to defend the various countries' positions in the negotiations.
- In Peru, few people had any understanding of how to proceed in the services negotiations, where the procedure was different from the negotiations on goods. Peruvian negotiators read the LATN papers and were consequently better prepared for the financial services negotiations.
- The Argentine position on dispute settlement in Mercosur was based on a paper prepared by the network.
- In Colombia, a meeting on free zones held at the Ministry of the Economy by the International Free Zones Committee examined the document that included direct quotes from a LATN study.
- In a paper establishing Venezuela's negotiating position, a portion of the document prepared by the network was included without attribution.

#### *6.2.2. Participation in forums*

When it comes to indirect influence through attendance at seminars and forums, the following should be noted:

---

<sup>47</sup> The government's program for the automotive industry coincided with the content of one interviewee's column in a prestigious São Paulo newspaper. Yet it is difficult to make this connection. In a general sense it can be done, but it is very hard in specific terms.

- Forum in Costa Rica, in the context of the Central American Regional Ministerial Council, which brought together between 35 and 40 negotiators from Central American countries in the run-up to the Seattle meeting. It focused on agriculture. This experiment was rated very favourably, as having generated a very open climate of discussion that participants were unable to reproduce anywhere else. In official meetings, negotiators are reluctant to share information or to expose their negotiating strategy. In this case, on the contrary, there was a more informal and more neutral exchange. It also provided a setting for direct influence in terms of negotiating positions in the WTO. As debate progressed, participants discovered that their positions were at odds, even though they were members of the same negotiating bloc. In short, the negotiators discovered that it was possible to design and implement a common strategy.
- On various occasions, FLACSO Buenos Aires hosted debates involving private sector representatives, policymakers, and LATN researchers.
- Agriculture seminar organized by LATN, intended to equip policymakers for the upcoming international negotiation. It provided an opportunity to select candidates to serve as agricultural attachés at embassies in Europe. Thereafter, the Ministry of Agriculture prepared a series of studies that were turned into manuals and are now to be found in every decision maker's office.
- Two meetings were held during 2002, in Peru and Colombia, on the intersection between the FTAA and the WTO. On those occasions, network papers were presented, in particular one dealing with Colombia's perspective on trade policy. The fact that policymakers from countries in this region of the Pacific attended those meetings was also considered to represent concrete indirect influence.

### 6.2.3. *Education and training courses*

- Training courses were held in Peru and Argentina for policymakers and private sector representatives. They dealt with various issues on the multilateral agenda. These activities generated a climate for effective interchange between players. For each topic, attention focused on unresolved issues, highlighting factors that should be stressed during the negotiations. Participants recognized that they had discovered new areas within the issues covered: until that time they had been unaware that these areas could be part of the negotiation.
- A negotiations simulation module was organized with UNCTAD, at which participants (policymakers and private sector representatives) were divided into four groups: EU, U.S.A., Developed Countries and Importing Countries. On this occasion, negotiating techniques were explained and applied as a learning experience.

The training courses proved to have positive externalities. They also helped to distinguish the LATN network institutionally from FLACSO, and to give it its own

profile. This was one of the most important activities for making the network better known and for disseminating the results of its research on issues of central concern.

## **7. Factors affecting policy influence**

This section examines a series of factors that have an impact on the influence exerted by the project's studies. In most cases it is not possible to isolate the influence of a given project or piece of research. Moreover, these factors can work in opposite directions, in some cases enhancing influence and in other cases impeding it. Successful cases frequently exhibit both effects. Following is an examination of the most important factors identified in the LATN experiment, evidence for which was collected during the interviews.

In their strategies for integrating themselves internationally, countries of the region have opened their economies to varying degrees, ranging from semi-closure in some cases to unrestricted, unilateral opening in others.

As these countries become more open, issues relating to international market integration become more important. This sets the stage for research to exert "virtual influence" in policy preparation and decision-making. In other words, it opens an opportunity for exerting influence on the formulation of trade negotiation policy.

Nevertheless, it was found that this influence will depend primarily on the permeability and the receptivity of certain key players: in other words, the degree of porosity to the influence of academic studies. In this respect, countries exhibit uneven degrees of receptivity, which explains in part the differing influence achieved by research of the kind conducted by LATN.<sup>48</sup>

The interviews provided a variety of important elements in this field. The evidence collected led to the conclusion that receptivity to influence depends on a set of factors as analyzed below.

These factors can be combined to generate a climate favourable to the expression of ideas, and a disposition to welcome new or different viewpoints. On the other hand, those same factors can create an atmosphere of hostility or at least of indifference to the incorporation of new options into decision-making.

### **7.1. Interest in the topic of international trade negotiations**

Trade negotiations are becoming an important component of international relations. Moreover, they are being given priority in international cooperation. The multiplicity of

---

<sup>48</sup> In effect, differing degrees of receptivity coincide with similar strategies of external openness, and vice versa. In the case of Brazil and Chile, the greater porosity externalized by the public sector is linked to the form of relationship adopted by governments with the private sector and the academic world. On the other hand, Argentina and Mexico also present strategic differences, although both countries are more reluctant to accept participation by non-governmental players in the international trade negotiations.



negotiating forms has revealed the lack of capacity in Latin American countries to handle them all simultaneously. On the other hand, the strategic shift toward greater openness in most countries of the region has given more importance to international trade negotiation issues. The context is now favourable to influencing the formulation of strategies to be followed in those negotiations, in the context of trade policy reforms. The lack of any appropriate technical and information infrastructure showed the value of the support that the network could provide.<sup>49</sup>

More generally, it should be noted that since the failure of the Seattle WTO meeting there has been renewed interest in this type of analysis. Until that time, it was very clear to everyone what the strategies should be, and how to proceed with liberalizing world trade. Yet the Seattle events took most players by surprise. For one thing, they demonstrated the complexity of the issues. The obstacles and the complications in the debate were much greater than most players had imagined until that time.

After Seattle, it was recognized in many circles that the matter of trade negotiations was much more complicated, and that they would extend over many years, that it was important to have a better understanding of what was happening, and that in the end there was no clear understanding of the comparative advantages of regional or multilateral agreements<sup>50</sup>. This sparked a new interest among many sectors to understand more thoroughly what was happening. In this respect, the timing of the project was perfect, and this had a favourable impact on the development of LATN.

## **7.2. The economic context**

There are two separate economic factors in play: the shifting economic model, and the macroeconomic instability that has characterized many countries of the region in recent years. Both of these factors had a heavy impact on the policy influence of studies.

Shifts in the economic model provoked changes in the behaviour of all players. The implementation of labour, welfare, governmental and financial reforms changed the rules of the game, and the priorities of the principal economic agents.

The severe deterioration in macroeconomic conditions over the last several years meant that the central themes of the project were shunted to the background. Public attention was focused on economic adjustment and the deteriorating economic situation made policymakers less receptive. Short-term problems became the focus of discussion. This was tremendously important in changing the priority of policy issues for government. Trade ceased to be a topic of interest. The emphasis in the media was on the most acute

---

<sup>49</sup> Brazil's well-organized structure for international negotiations sets it apart from other countries of the region. As part of that organization, monthly meetings were held with businesspeople, labour unions and government, to consider issues relating to the FTAA and other international agreements. Argentina is far from achieving this.

<sup>50</sup> Doubt was also cast on the advantages of regional agreements, in case the WTO agreement were to function well; or perhaps it would be better to strike regional accords or bilateral deals with the United States.

financial problems. Under these circumstances, it was difficult to integrate and articulate the policy implications of the studies with national priorities.

Nevertheless, these circumstances also highlighted the need to adopt a broader, regional vision, and to look beyond the immediate problems of a local or national nature. Since, with these pressures generated by the crises, it was impossible to address these issues squarely, a vacuum was created, and it was occupied by LATN. In this move it was helped by the fact that these areas of interest did not create any confrontation with governments, which were preoccupied in dealing with immediate problems. The influence of LATN was enhanced by the receptivity generated by the dramatic circumstances prevailing in these countries.

### **7.3. The political context**

In political terms, there was a change in the content and the priority of issues on the agenda, generating an unfavourable climate that relegated the project's prime topics to the sidelines. This situation sharpened the dominant features of the political system and its structure and functions: local and regional instability, lack of consensus, political patronage, and subordination to hegemonic interests and to international agencies.

According to some of the opinions expressed during the interviews, there was a common denominator at work here: the region's political instability precluded proper use of the network's output. The scope of the network's activities was constrained not so much by the situation in any one country, but rather by the regional context as a whole.

Another factor to note is the lack of consensus on economic policy, especially with respect to certain basic issues. The lack of continuity in policies, where policies can be easily influenced by sectoral interests. In these circumstances, the relationship between policy, knowledge and rationality collapses, and policy formation is left to the mercy of certain ascendant interests within the power structure.

The political situation no doubt weighed heavily on the project's impact. The common denominator came to be the political and economic instability of the region, and each country became preoccupied with basic issues of survival. Trade matters were eclipsed and their profile (direction, content, issues) shifted, leaving the thrust and direction of the negotiations unclear.

### **7.4. Political and institutional factors**

These vary from case to case, and include:

- a) The degree of democratization.
- b) The margin of government independence from vested interests.
- c) The strategic domestic relationship between government and other players of civil society (academics and researchers, the private sector, public opinion, the mass media).

In some countries, domestic policies facilitated interaction between the public and private sectors: for example, the private sector was consulted in preparing lists of products for inclusion in trade agreements. Nevertheless, this consultation mechanism was not systematic, and was resorted to only when the negotiation was imminent.

In Chile, the greater degree of receptivity to civilian technical influence, which could be seen in the very close contact with the private sector and academics, helped to legitimize the process of opening the economy that was launched under the dictatorship. In Brazil, where the strategy was not so liberal as the Chilean one, the relationship with the private and academic sectors was used to postpone the country's opening to trade, and as a means of legitimizing its external strategy. Indeed, despite strategic differences, both countries are very permeable to influence from civil society.

In Argentina, transparency in the process was undermined by the presence of lobbies with strong political and technical backing, and there were no channels for structured participation or for open discussion of the agreements negotiated. At the same time, Mexico, as part of NAFTA, has shown little inclination to speed up the implementation of the FTAA, and it has demonstrated no interest in interacting with the private sector.

#### d) Institutional relations between the academic world and policymakers

In Brazil, the government enters into contracts with the universities. There is a long tradition of contracting studies and research to meet specific government needs. This trend has been reinforced since the mid-1990s, and this has limited LATN's influence on the domestic scene in Brazil. In this sense, the network's influence is completely different from what it is in Peru or in Costa Rica. In Brazil, this institutional characteristic means that the contracting of studies is the predominant mechanism of influence for academic researchers.

In contrast, Argentina has no such tradition, which means that research studies generally remain locked up within the institutional environment that generated them, and so their spillover effect is greatly reduced.

#### e) Turnover of technical staff in government

An important factor in Argentina is the lack of continuity in the management ranks of government. This has led to a lack of focus and has disrupted continuity in the issues in the negotiations. Because policymakers, who are the natural interlocutors of the network, change so frequently, the dialogue is constantly being interrupted, with the attendant loss of time, knowledge and personal relationships. When the teams that are primarily responsible for thinking, discussing and formulating options are replaced so frequently, this generates institutional confusion and drift. Rotation generates volatility, each player takes his issues with him, and his replacement has to start from scratch. The incoming player has no sources of reference as to what has to be negotiated and with whom. This represents a loss of the capacity that had been built up in support of policy formulation.

On the contrary, in Brazil the teams and the issues on the agenda are much more permanent. The greater degree of firmness in its external relations has translated into greater solidity and a longer-term horizon in its policies than is the case in Argentina. In general, it is expected that the economic situation will be less disruptive of the direction and thrust of international negotiations in Brazil than in Argentina.

In Argentina, moreover, the appointment of academic researchers to positions of responsibility in government is severely constrained by the potential consequences (legal and financial considerations, loss of prestige, personal insecurity) to which they may be exposed.

When instability mounts the negative impact of this factor increases. This is clear when one recognizes that the people who are most receptive to the knowledge generated and disseminated by the network are precisely those who may accede to the positions of Secretary or Undersecretary. These are the people who lose power in a context of institutional instability. They lose their capacity to introduce changes and support sustained actions. And since these are the project's target group, this affects the project's impact decisively, as that target group loses power and its influence on policy formulation declines.

#### 7.5. Cultural factors

It is difficult to explain why each country incorporates the academic world into policymaking to different degrees. Why is there a smooth-flowing relationship in some cases, and blockage in others? In general, one may point to cultural factors to explain this differentiation: a country's tradition of basing decisions on studies from the scientific and academic community.

In general, it may be said that there is responsibility on both sides for the lack of adequate communication and interchange. In some cases, this involves the arrogance of certain intellectuals, in others the ignorance that prevails in much of the public and private sector. Despite this, interviewees stressed the need to provide guidance through courses, discussion groups and seminars, and others pointed to the role that the mass media (radio, TV, newspapers) could play in disseminating ideas. Indeed, one factor that was cited as limiting the sphere of influence was the stubborn resistance of researchers to the use of these media, in the apparent belief that the academic reputation of their work would be compromised by the "dumbing down" that popularizing it would inevitably entail.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, the degree of influence was found to be related to the varying makeup of civil society players. The case of Brazil is instructive on this point: there, the business sector has achieved a high degree of professionalism in its activities, it has been monitoring the trade negotiations closely, and it has stable and technically competent teams at its service.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> In the sense used by Caplan. See Neilson, S., op. cit.

<sup>52</sup> The quality of studies prepared by Brazil's CNI provides ample evidence on this point.

## **7.6. Networking**

This factor constituted a distinctive feature of the project. The LATN built a wide network of personal, professional and institutional ties with outstanding players in the various spheres of activity - national, regional, international - with respected academics, first-rank researchers in the region, policymakers, negotiators, senior directors and executives, international agencies such as the World Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), the WTO, etc. This facilitated access to policy-formulating decision makers, creating an atmosphere in which their products were well received. At the same time, it strengthened support for participants and help to establish a community of interests around the network's activities.

## **7.7. Analyzing and planning activities**

Another important factor of influence has to do with planning work sufficiently in advance of international events and negotiating forums. Success in this respect intensified the interest of different target audiences and individuals, by making them aware in advance of what the network thought about specific issues. It generated an expectant and interested audience, consisting in many cases of influential players, seeking information, knowledge, options, etc.

In joining the WTO, countries had the impression that they would reap significant and immediate benefits. Those expectations were not fulfilled in reality, and the impression turned out to be false. This demonstrated the need for countries to pass through a learning process before deciding to join new international trade agreements. The Network's efforts contributed effectively to establishing this viewpoint, by showing that countries had to be more aware, that they must be more careful in the negotiations, and that they needed greater negotiating capacity.

This point can be nicely illustrated by the discussions surrounding the entry of countries into the FTAA. Clearly, negotiation of this agreement did not figure on the political agenda. In this sense, the Network's activities were designed to highlight the importance of helping to improve the performance of the negotiators and policymakers, based on the experience gained with the WTO negotiations.

## **7.8. Characteristics of network members**

Players with the potential for influence will have the following characteristics:

- A professional history as a researcher, and experience in the academic field and in research, accumulated over many years.
- Reputation, prestige and recognition among their peers, as well as among other notable players in positions of academic and political responsibility.
- Intellectual and academic output on issues of their specialty.
- Originality of approach and in the methodological design of research.

These attributes have been singled out as factors important to the policy influence of research. The actor's image, linked to his scientific output, becomes an indirect mechanism for exerting influence in the world of ideas. This helps to give him legitimacy, and to make him a player with the potential to exert influence in the specific fields in which he has demonstrated competence and authority.

As well, dissemination of his intellectual output contributes to this legitimizing, promoting the image of a specialized academic researcher who keeps abreast of specific issues. Moreover, the presence of national researchers on the international scene lends legitimacy to their own country. This constitutes an instrument of great importance for their ability to exert influence.<sup>53</sup>

Then there is the researcher's personal networking, his professional and personal relationships, which will depend to some extent on his academic output. It is his personal influence that is decisive, but this cannot be entirely divorced from his intellectual output. Having personal relationships in place for exerting influence becomes a necessary but not a sufficient condition. The problem is multifaceted, and combines many attributes of the active subject of the influence.

The network embraces a diversity of players: the Director, members of the Coordination Unit, the Advisory Council, researchers in private institutions, NGO representatives, university teachers and researchers, former students of FLACSO, private and public sector consultants, government advisers, advisers from international agencies, negotiators, policymakers.

Their credentials are recognized and respected both locally and internationally. Generally speaking, they have wide-ranging personal and professional networks and they have good relations with people in important positions within the ministries, the private sector, and internationally. One case deserves particular note: Diana Tussie, Director of LATN, was an undersecretary in the Argentine Trade Department. Her participation made it possible to exert influence on the policies and decisions adopted by the Argentine government during those years.

On the other hand, the network has served as a communication mechanism, maintaining links among its members that have served to bind them together. This may be explained by a series of attributes inherited from the institution where the project is based (FLACSO): teamwork, transparency, interdisciplinary work and complementarity.

Naturally, it is difficult to distinguish the impact of each factor on the influence actually exercised. In fact, not all of the influence potential can be attributed to the existence of the project, given the varied degree of involvement of each of the network's members. In many cases, the influence that LATN managed to exert was limited.

---

<sup>53</sup> On this point, one example noted by the interviewees was the appearance of local researchers in books published in the United States. A researcher may have been saying the same thing for the last ten years in his own country, but if he can be published outside his country in a book in English, his credibility will be much greater. Although this may seem a trivial point, it is quite important.

### 7.9. The LATN approach and its "trademark"

One important factor that has distinguished LATN's activities has been to establish a setting for independent and objective thinking about issues of interest to these countries. LATN takes a Latin American perspective, and its studies are undertaken from a viewpoint that is not necessarily pertinent to any country in particular. This has helped to give it legitimacy, as has the fact that its funding has come from donor agencies such as IDRC.

Institutionally, LATN has positioned itself between countries, governments and international agencies. Governments do not participate in it as such, and this avoids conflicts that might result from the uneven distribution of power among countries. As well, it is not subordinate to any national, political, sectoral or corporate interests, and this is particularly important when it comes to taking decisions on highly sensitive issues.

The composition and the institutional location of LATN help it to maintain a viewpoint that is independent of governments and of international agencies (IMF, World Bank, WTO, UNCTAD). Moreover, this independence allows it to strive for a common or regional viewpoint, one that goes beyond the narrow bounds of national interests and that also saves it from being seen as an alliance of members who have decided to negotiate as a consortium because they are individually weak.

These characteristic features of LATN's work have given it the capacity to incorporate its research results into national priorities. Because it is close to negotiators and government decision makers, it has ready access to sources of information on the negotiating Agenda. Its familiarity with the problems facing negotiators allows it to incorporate the Agenda as a component of its research and dissemination program.

One important factor in the project's influence has been articulation between the public and private sectors. LATN has succeeded in creating a forum where people who are thoroughly committed to public sector work can interact with researchers. This is particularly important given the lack of forums and platforms for the discussion of policies. Creating opportunities for these activities has contributed to the dissemination of trade negotiation issues and the sharing of research results.

Finally, it is important to consider the particular way that LATN has of looking at problems. This consists of combining knowledge and placing it at the disposal of a particular sphere. It involves taking approaches from the literature and prioritizing them in a certain way, applying them to a specific issue related to the trade negotiations. This combination includes a component on the WTO legal rules, the policies of the major trading blocs, the domestic interests of countries involved in the negotiations, etc. It has a particular approach, which might be called "international political economy" or "international institutional political economy" with a combination of technical, legal, juridical and economic elements. This may be considered an approach that is unique to

the project, created by LATN: academic knowledge applied specifically to a concrete sphere.

#### **7.10. Designing and implementing an outreach strategy**

The project has designed, adopted and implemented an effective strategy for disseminating technical knowledge, information and the results of studies. This dissemination was targeted at key players in the trade negotiations, international networks interested in related issues, and a general audience (the internal network of LATN) consisting of researchers, negotiators, policymakers, representatives of the private sector and the mass media. There were also workshops, courses, seminars, forums, and mailings to influential players.

The dissemination strategy was designed with a view to informing policy formulation and decision-making. It made use of appropriate formats (primarily briefings) adapted to the reading-time availability of the target groups. These activities were programmed so as to reach their targets sufficiently in advance with timely material, of high academic and technical quality, and in most cases adapted and updated to reflect the current status of the negotiating agenda.

The courses, forums, and seminars that were held, and the participation of well-known academics, representatives of international organizations and influential figures in those events, constituted a guarantee of credibility. In addition, the website was widely and repeatedly visited.

A start was recently made at publishing the first books from LATN, but it is too soon to assess their impact. The fact that the first important book was published solely in English limited its circulation. There is no doubt that this is an obstacle in Brazil, but also in other Latin American countries where English is not so widespread.

Another point deserves mention in this connection. The acronym by which the network is known derives from its English name (Latin American Trade Network), and it is not known whether there is a name in Spanish.

These facts raise the question of what is the actual sphere that the network has defined for disseminating the results of its work. Apparently the stress is on reaching international agencies, developed countries, the international academic community, and less importance is attached to the countries of the region. This could be counterproductive, because it would restrict the broader dissemination of research results and would diminish interest in the network's work on the part of the larger countries (Brazil).

#### **7.11. Correlation of forces**

Another factor that affects the degree of influence of the studies has to do with the correlation of forces.



In this respect, the hegemony of the ideas advocated and the measures imposed by agencies with great power and influence in the functioning of the international economy (the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the IMF) and the so-called "Washington consensus" is widely recognized. This means that the question of where influence can be exerted depends on the correlation of forces. In many cases, the relationship is decidedly tilted in favour of the influencing party, which succeeds in imposing its ideology, its worldview, and the *modus operandi* of the world system.

In other cases, academic researchers become mere operatives at the service of private lobbies, manipulating their knowledge in defence of interest groups. This also applies to political groups, sectors or parties, using knowledge in defence of political causes, within and outside the functioning of government.

## **8. Some conclusions**

An analysis of LATN documents and the evidence gleaned from interviews points to some preliminary conclusions. These are offered in an attempt to answer the three fundamental questions to which this study was addressed.

The opinions collected come from members of the network located in different countries of the region, with various specializations, distinct personal views, and differing roles and degrees of involvement in the project. Moreover, they belong to countries with different economic, political and social structures, with different strategies for international integration, and experiencing different economic circumstances.

These aspects taken together make it difficult to achieve a sufficiently articulated and consistent overall vision that will be valid for all the cases studied.

On the other hand, caution must be exercised in attempting to isolate the incidence of factors of different kinds (economic, political, ideological, corporate, international) that are involved in taking policy decisions.

Notwithstanding the difficulties, it may be said that this study has served to identify and highlight the importance of some components of the influence that research can exert on policy formulation.

A. LATN must be considered a success in terms of policy influence in the context of projects supported by IDRC. It was very highly rated according to the institutional criteria that the Centre uses, and was frequently pointed to as a model of the objectives underlying the Trade, Employment and Competitiveness (TEC) Program Initiative. There is no doubt that it inspired the creation in 1999 of the Mercosur Network, with IDRC support, the coordinating office of which is based in Montevideo.

It has served as the nucleus for organizing and coordinating the research capacity of Latin American countries, building and consolidating an original network focused on a field of singular importance today. The central objective was to create a tool to help Latin

American countries position themselves more effectively in international trade negotiations. "To incorporate the multilateral agenda on these issues into the region, so as to configure it with a regional perspective". To meet the need for collective thinking about a common regional problem that nonetheless impacts each country differently. To construct a mechanism that these countries can use to evaluate their manoeuvring room for each of the issues on the agenda and to assess progress on those issues in the various negotiating forums. The analysis and discussion of these policies to inform what might be called the taking of national positions on international trade negotiations.

The success of the project lay in the fact that LATN succeeded in defining, integrating and articulating a set of appropriate inputs:

- The project took as its basis a prominent topic in the current configuration of international relations: the multiplicity of negotiating forums, which requires complex and simultaneous activities consistent with a broad vision. This, moreover, in a setting where major changes are being made to the international strategies of many countries participating in the negotiations. The lack of appropriate technical and information infrastructure demonstrated the value and importance of the support that the network could provide. In this respect, the project was extremely timely, and this factor did much to promote the growth of LATN. Moreover, nothing happened to complicate its growth. The general view was that the panorama is increasingly complex, but there are growing opportunities to contribute with ideas, because there are no sure fixes.
- The network embraced relevant players in their respective specialties: governmental officials (negotiators, policymakers), senior officials of international agencies, first-rate researchers and teachers, representatives of the private sector and NGOs, the media, private and public sector consultants, government advisers, consultants from international agencies. All of these persons had recognized track records that gave them legitimacy and recognition locally and internationally.
- The project succeeded in building and consolidating a network of personal, professional and institutional relations that opened it to a broad audience. The network members enjoyed wide networking and personal relations; a good relationship with people in important positions in the ministries and the private sector, and international ties.
- LATN has placed great emphasis on designing and implementing an outreach strategy aimed at influencing certain key players. This strategy was targeted at the participants in the negotiations, at international networks for related issues, and at a general audience (the internal LATN network) consisting of researchers, negotiators, policymakers, representatives of the private sector and the media. There were also workshops, courses, seminars, forums, and mailings to influential players.

On the other hand, there have been intensive efforts at coordination, at nurturing links and identifying the resource represented by the accumulation of knowledge, so as to generate a type of product that is accessible to users. The formats selected were appropriate to the time that the different target groups had available for reading them, noting in particular the success of the briefings in this regard. Participation in key events by well-known academics, representatives of international agencies and influential people in general contributed to its credibility.

The network provided advice to the public authorities and produced knowledge, but it did not limit itself to these two activities: it also engaged in coordination and outreach, and put researchers in touch with other users. Another significant aspect was the way in which the network was able to compile and organize information on a given issue within a single, readily accessible place.

Outreach activities succeeded in putting the public and private sectors in contact, especially through outreach based on the use of materials that were accessible, concise and quickly readable, yet prepared by specialists. In this task, the intent was to combine rigorousness with accessibility.

- The particular focus of LATN is another important element. LATN's approach to trade policy issues helps in thinking about the concrete challenges facing governments. It was primarily because of this way of approaching trade policy issues that LATN members were so frequently consulted on them.

This constituted an output derived from the original project, from the concept by which the methodology was designed. Careful examination of the issues selected for study, and the focus to be adopted, helped to delineate the central problems of trade policy. The studies combined knowledge from various fields and applied it to specific trade issues (international legal rules, the political thrust of actions by the major trading blocks, the domestic interests of countries involved in the negotiations, etc.). An "international institutional political economy" approach, with a combination of technical, legal, juridical and economic elements.

This combination of perspectives has been developed and reinforced within LATN. It is evident in the definition and content of research, and it is one of the reasons why network members are constantly being consulted.

- Another noteworthy aspect is the special role that politically independent research can play. The increased knowledge and information that LATN provides can reach levels that are politically very sensitive and useful for the negotiators. This is because of its political independence and the fact that it is not beholden in any way to the negotiating parties. This allowed it to influence the priority rankings of the negotiating issues, amending some and adding others.

B. The scope of these inputs has been limited by the effect of factors specific to each case. These factors affect the potential for influence, in terms of the degree, the type, the

form and the mechanism through which influence is exerted. This generates a set of variants that make it impossible to extract a single and universally valid rule.

- The relationship between receptivity to the influence of research and the institutional structure of the relationships between that research and the public sector differ from one country to the next.
- The economic situation of countries in the region can have a dual impact on the relationship between researchers and policymakers. On one hand, crises are favourable to a project of this type. The importance of the issues under discussion sparks interest in learning about progress, generating conditions favourable to strengthening relations between the two sides. On the other hand, it can also cause researchers to be gradually shut out from any interchange with policymakers.
- There are some predominant common features in the structure and functioning of political systems in most Latin American countries: instability, lack of political consensus, divergent economic policies and international strategies, differing views about trade negotiations. This would seem to be a common denominator for determining the degree of receptivity to influence.
- The degree of democratization of the policy formulation process. When that process is relatively transparent and open to debate, research can play a more constructive role. If it is relatively elitist, authoritarian, non-transparent and subject to vested interests, research can also play a role, but it may work against the general welfare. In certain cases, the government may have a degree of independence from private interests, and the value of knowledge-research will be significant. In other cases, decisions are taken in closed groups with vested interests, where research will not have the same importance or influence.
- In terms of the degree of permeability, some factors are especially relevant. Among these are the institutional relationships between the academic and technical world and the policymakers and negotiators: these would seem to be the principal factor in determining the different areas where influence can be exerted directly. When it comes to contracting the services of senior specialists to advise on very specific policy issues, the influence is direct. Similarly, interaction between researchers with counterparts in the public sector who may have varying academic and educational levels can generate very different forms of and capacities for influence in each country.
- The mobility of players between government and the academic world or the private sector, which leads to volatility in government technical teams, is a factor that limits the impact of research on policy formulation.
- There are varying degrees of knowledge about trade issues among the countries studied, and this explains the different needs for targeted, specialized information

on specific issues. Some countries, such as Brazil and Chile, have had a greater strategic sense and have invested more in the negotiations without making use of the network.

- The policy formulation process differs among the countries of the network, and their decision-making structures are different. This is a factor of interest if one is looking for the third type of influence: modifying existing policies. On the other hand, if one opts for the broader, indirect definition of influence, the opportunities to influence will still be present, even if there are changes among senior government officeholders.
- In the field of culture, the knowledge generated through scientific and academic means is applied to varying extents in different countries. This reflects a degree of cultural backwardness, which manifests itself in a pronounced distancing between the academic sector that produces studies and the public sector that consumes them. This in turn will have a direct impact on the capacity to influence policy formulation.

C. The activities of LATN, taking the inputs mentioned and working with knowledge, information and research results, had a significant impact in expanding policy capacity and in broadening policy horizons. It also had some influence on the content and design of policies. In this last case, direct influence was exerted through networking with members of the public sector, and assuming positions of political responsibility.

What did it really mean to have influence in the case of the LATN network? What does it mean to have influence? One accepted meaning regards “influence” as success in changing some government policy, program, measure or action. Yet such a definition has generally been found to be too restrictive, too narrow and unfairly severe in judging the impact that research can have on government actions.

A second meaning, accepted by the majority, treats influence more broadly, regarding it as a continuum, with a direct impact at one extreme and a general conceptual change at the other.

The evidence collected suggests that influence reached many players, taking many forms, as indicated in the body of this report.

This evidence confirms that research fulfills many positive functions, but that not all of them are equally measurable: they appear over different time horizons (immediate, medium-term and long-term effects). An individual may undertake research today, and the knowledge generated will serve him ten years from now when he becomes a minister. On the other hand, the same knowledge may have served another individual the day after it was generated, and still another a year later. With all of these different time horizons, it is futile to expect immediate effects.

More specifically, in the case of LATN, research has fulfilled a medium and long-term function that cannot be perceived in its totality within the lifetime of one project. It consisted in expanding the menu of options available to negotiators and policymakers in their work.

In a more direct, more specific sense, LATN can offer various options to negotiator who, assailed by conflicting pressures and interests and lost in an ever more complicated maze, is struggling to find answers to problems. It offers a viewpoint or a better position from which to appreciate the problem, without influencing the ultimate decision. This helps more with the way problems are organized and the way decisions are taken, rather than proposing specific solutions. Thus, while it expands the performance capacity of negotiators, at the same time it generates a gradual shift in conceptual thinking, and therefore in policies.

There is another type of influence, also difficult to identify, that should be mentioned. This is the project's contribution to policy transparency, in the sense that it helps to publicize what is being negotiated. Disseminating the contents of negotiation produces an automatic impact, since relevant players will now be informed and can react in response to that information. Being aware of successful or failed experiments in other countries makes it possible to avoid those errors, while achieving more manoeuvring room in the negotiations.

The case of LATN produced some findings that confirm the hypotheses used by Weiss. In fact, problem-solving was not the main use that was made of the network's research. Nor was it the application of specific data to specific decisions. In reality, it was used in a more diffused and indirect manner, as a source of ideas, information and coordination, and of general guidance.

In the same sense as that given by Weiss, the foregoing seems to confirm the view that knowledge achieved through research can enlighten and expand the performance capacity of negotiators, by generating a gradual shift in conceptual thinking, and hence in the policies that support this conceptual thinking.<sup>54</sup>

LATN has a very solid image and it is highly respected by people who have a great deal of clout in regional and world trade policy. These judgments are often filtered through mechanisms that are difficult to specify, but that generate a favourable image for the project. The briefing is the final medium, but it could not by itself open doors. A certain degree of prestige had to be achieved first. If a respected researcher looks favourably on LATN's work, this is not only because of the briefing but also because he has read other, more substantive documents from the network that allowed him to appreciate the seriousness with which issues are treated, the breadth of viewpoints expressed, the timeliness of the topics selected, and other factors of this kind. The issue is not as simple as finding a means of outreach to open doors. It is a combination of factors, in other words a multi-variant question.

---

<sup>54</sup> See Neilson, S., *op. cit.*

One conclusion that emerges naturally from this report is that there is no standard model that will fit all countries. Consequently, what is needed is a better understanding of how local systems function, whether in the political-institutional, the economic or the academic sense, recognizing that there are factors beyond the control of IDRC and the researchers themselves.

In pursuing projects that are specifically aimed at having policy influence or that have significant potential to influence policy formulation, there are a number of specific aspects that must be considered in their design, execution and evaluation. This is particularly true for projects of trans-national scope.

The principal recommendation flowing from this study has to do with the definition and design of projects aimed at influencing policy formulation. In this respect, it would seem advisable to define a "pre-project stage", involving a series of prior studies, or the analysis of existing studies, to clarify such aspects as the following:

- i. The structure of the decision-making process, recognizing that the language used is greatly influenced by the way public systems in advanced countries operate.
- ii. The design of the strategy for disseminating results.
- iii. The structure of personal, professional and institutional links that will have to be pursued in order to secure the support of local groups and other participants. Research systems function in different ways. Academics are not holed up in an ivory tower. They are constantly coming and going, and often fulfill several roles at once.
- iv. Analysis of the institutional relationships between the public sector, the academic world, and the private sector. Consultation mechanisms outside government are very different. The relationship between universities and governments (in the U.S. style) is different. In Latin America there is an enormous variety of political and economic institutions, which precludes any single recipe for influence that will work in all countries at all times.
- v. Careful planning of activities with the potential for influence. It is important to weigh the pros and cons. The researchers need to define with whom they are going to interact: they cannot be indifferent to the sphere in which they are going to exert influence, and moreover the mechanisms of influence will be different. Audiences will vary and it may be necessary to select other players from the system, such as the private sector, to influence the public debate.
- vi. Opportunities or a favourable context for the formulation of policies relating to trade, international negotiations, and external integration. Given both the heterogeneity referred to, and the different time horizons, the formulators of a research project must think much more realistically about those goals (short, medium and long-term) and must be more sensitive to local conditions.

vii. Special account should be taken of the project's contribution for small countries, especially when it comes to networks like LATN. Those countries can benefit greatly from networks that include players from bigger countries and have highly trained researchers as members. Moreover, there are many benefits to be had from influencing each other, and there is the added advantage of being able to analyze a given problem in horizontal terms between the different countries of the network.

There is no doubt that networks of the LATN kind should consider more carefully the fact that they are interacting with very different spheres. They must recognize that some impacts will be felt at the national level, in dialogues in forums with the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States, or the World Bank, while other impacts will occur at the local level. But these local impacts will be very different in Brazil, Peru or Honduras. Consequently, if the intent is to have an impact in each of those countries, the strategies will need to be designed very differently.

Finally, it is clear that the allocation of specific funding for this pre-project stage can be of great help in defining the objectives, the target audiences, the expected impacts of influence, and the other aspects discussed. Naturally, these will be crucial aspects to bear in mind in the subsequent evaluation of the project upon its completion, or at intermediate stages.



## ANNEX B

### Questions for the interviews

#### I. Conditions that gave rise to the project

1. What was your link to the project?
2. What was your main motivation in joining the project?
3. What role did you play?
4. What did you understand to be the use that would be made of the research produced by the project?
5. Who were the leading figures in the project? Gender analysis: who were the principal players and what role did they have in determining the type or degree of participation or involvement by different participants?
6. Who are the people formulating the policies, i.e. what individuals or groups?
7. Who are the participants at this level in particular? Gender analysis.
8. In preparing the project, did you consider the question of policy influence, and was it specifically included in the proposal?

#### II. During the course of the project

1. What was the objective that the project pursued at the outset?
2. Were the objectives achieved, revised, changed, eliminated, or were others added?
3. What outreach strategies were implied and for what purpose? Who were the players or groups at whom the project results were targeted?
4. Who was actually influenced? Who were they and in what way were they influenced?
5. Who made use of the project results? In what way? (Gender analysis: specify "who" and "what"; both men and women could have failed to use the results because they did not find them useful, or they could have used them for different reasons or purposes).
6. What do you understand by the influence of research on policy formulation?
7. What indicator do you use to determine whether research influenced the adoption of policies?
8. Indicate what was the predominant type of influence in the project (App. 1).
9. What did people in policy positions learn that they did not know before? What do they do now that they did not do before? How do you know this? (App. 1).
10. What new knowledge did the researchers acquire that they did not have before? What do they do now that they did not do before? How do you know this? (App. 1).
11. What were the factors working for or against the project?
12. What were the major changes in the setting (political, legislative, economic, technical, social) in which the project was conducted?

#### III. At the conclusion of the project

1. What happened after the project was completed?
2. What are you doing now?
3. What outreach activities have continued?

4. Who made use of the research results: the same people or others?
5. If the researchers and the policymakers are no longer connected with the project, what are they doing now?
6. If they are still involved in the project, or with the research results and recommendations, what role do they play and what work are they performing?
7. What other changes have occurred?

#### **IV. Gender**

Determine whether the analyses took account of gender considerations in the following areas of the policy influence process (cite evidence):

- Definition of the problem.
- Determination of objectives and beneficiaries.
- Definition of the research agenda.
- Definition of the links between research and policies.
- Formulation of policy alternatives.
- Selection of the preferred alternatives.
- (Where appropriate, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, policy review processes).

## Appendix. 1: Types of Policy Influence

### **Expanding Policy Capacities**

- Improving the knowledge/data of certain actors;
- Supporting recipients to develop innovative ideas;
- Improving capabilities to communicate ideas; and
- Developing new talent for research and analysis.

### **Broadening Policy Horizons**

- Providing opportunities for networking/learning within the jurisdiction or with colleagues elsewhere;
- Introducing new concepts to frame debates, putting ideas on the agenda or stimulating debate;
- Educating researchers and others to take up new positions with broader understanding of issues; and
- Stimulating quiet dialogue amongst decision-makers.

### **Affecting Policy Regimes**

- The modification of existing programmes or policies; and
- Fundamental redesign of programmes or policies.

## Bibliography

Carden F., et al. (2001). *IDRC-supported research in the public policy process: A strategic evaluation of the influence of research on public policy*. Evaluation Unit, IDRC, Ottawa.

Lindquist, E., (2001). *Discerning Policy Influence: Framework for a Strategic Evaluation of IDRC-Supported Research*. School of Public Administration, University of Victoria.

-----, (2000). *Think tanks and the ecology of policy inquiry* in Diane Stone (ed.) *Banking on Knowledge: The Genesis of the Global Development Network*, Routledge, London.

Neilson, S., (2001). *IDRC-Supported Research and its Influence on Public Policy. Knowledge Utilization and Public Policy Processes: A Literature Review*. Evaluation Unit, IDRC, Ottawa.

Fine, J.C., et al. (2001). *IDRC Program Initiative for Trade Employment and Competitiveness: Report of an External Evaluation*. IDRC, Ottawa.

## **Annex A**

### **Persons interviewed**

#### ***Luis Abuggatas***

- Executive Director of the Institute of Economic and Social Studies of the National Society of Industries (SNI), Lima, Peru
- International Consultant
- Member of the Intellectual Property Division of the INDECOPI Court

#### ***Alan Fairlie***

- Professor of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (Pontifical Catholic University of Peru), School of Social Sciences, Lima, Peru
  - Specialist in international economic affairs

#### ***Victoria Elmore V.***

- National Director of Multilateral Affairs and International Trade Negotiations Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Integration and International Trade Negotiations of Peru

#### ***Liliana Honorio***

- Consultant  
Vice Minister of Integration and International Trade Negotiations  
Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Integration and International Trade Negotiations of Peru

#### ***Daniel Chudnovsky***

- Director of CENIT (‘Centro de Investigaciones para la Transformación’), Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Researcher with LATN

#### ***Celia De Luca***

- Consultant of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Consultant of the Ministry of Economy

- Specialist in integration issues
- Negotiator

***Alberto de las Carreras***

- Agricultural Engineer
- Businessman
  - Specialist in agricultural issues
- Author of various publications

***Enrique Carrier***

- Lawyer
- Career Diplomat, specialist in economic and financial issues
- International Negotiator
- Director of Economic Affairs of the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Director of the Foreign Trade Division of the Stock Exchange of Buenos Aires
- General Coordinator of the Ministry of Economy

***Eduardo Bianchi***

- Economist, specialist in International Trade Affairs (commercial protection, antidumping, safeguards, subsidies and WTO issues).
- General Manager of the Foreign Trade Commission of Argentina
- Undersecretary of Foreign Trade Management in the Department of Commerce of Argentina

***José M. Fanelli***

- Economist
- Researcher of CEDES ('Centro de Estudios sobre el Estado y la Sociedad'), Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Researcher of LATN
- Researcher of the 'Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas' (National Council of Scientific and Technical Research)
- Specialist in Macroeconomics and Finance

***Liliana Bertoni***

- Lawyer
- Master in International Relations
- Professor of Private International Law, University of Buenos Aires
- Specialist in Integration Law and Mercosur areas
- Consultant at the Department of Industry

- Vice President of ECSA-Argentina ('Asociación de Estudios sobre la Comunidad Europea en Argentina')

***Valentina Delich***

- Member of the Coordination Unit of LATN in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Lawyer
- Specialist in International Relations
- Professor of International Economic Law

***Miguel Lengyel***

- Project Deputy Director of LATN in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Lawyer
- PhD in Political Economy, MIT
- Specialist in International Political Economy

***Cintia Quiliconi***

- Member of the Coordination Unit of LATN in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Politologist
- Specialist in Political Economy

***Diana Tussie***

- Project Director of LATN in Buenos Aires, Argentina

***Gabriel Casaburi***

- PhD in Political Economy
- Specialist in industrial and trade policy (International Political Economy)
- Professor at the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Researcher of IERAL ('Fundación Mediterránea')
- Undersecretary in the Ministry of Industry - Productive Development and Intellectual Property.

***Marcelo de Paiva Abreu***

- Professor of the Department of Economics at the PUC (Pontifical Catholic University) Rio of Janeiro, Brazil
- Specialization areas: International Economy, trade policies and economic history)
- Former official of the Ministry of Planning
- Former Director of FINEP (Financial backer of Studies and Projects)

- Former Secretary of Economy (Areas of Trade Policy, Prices and Industrial Development Policy)
- PhD Cambridge University
- Columbia University and Oxford University Visiting Professor

***Paulo Bastos Tigre***

- Professor of the Institute of Economy of the UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Economist
- Master in Production Engineering
- PhD in Science Policy in Sussex
- Specialist in Industrial Organization and Information Technology

***Pedro da Motta Veiga***

- Economist
- Specialist in Trade and Industrial Policies
- Consultant of CNI (National Confederation of Industries of Brazil)
- Consultant to the Government and to international organizations in International Negotiation issues (FTAA, EU, WTO, Mercosur)
- Former Director of FUNCEX (Foreign Business Studies Foundation), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Former Head of Cabinet of the President of the BNDES (National Bank for Economic and Social Development)
- Former Director of Foreign Business Financing at the BNDES

***Marcel Vaillant***

- Economist
- Master Lovaina
- Director del Departamento de Economía de la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay

***Andrés Rius***

- Program Officer at Lacro, IDRC, Montevideo, Uruguay